



KHYBER RIFLES 1878-2014

Sur Lakki



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The Khyber Rifles

1878 -2014

Preface

Khyber Rifles trace their origin to the Second Afghan War of 1878-79, the British initiated the establishment of the first political agency on the western frontier exclusively for the Khyber Pass, The Khyber Agency. An area within the Punjab province which was directly under the Foreign Secretary of India at Calcutta. The pass had recently been taken over from the Afghanistan under the treaty of Gandamak. Major Warburton became its first political agent and remained so for another eighteen years. He raised Khyber Jazailchis with Major Sardar Aslam Khan Sadozai who also served for same time period as the first commandant. Khyber Pass, Khyber Rifles, Colonel Warburton and Colonel Sardar Aslam Khan all have now become synonym. It is worth highlighting that both Warburton and Aslam had Afghan blood line.

Khyber Rifle were raised as an irregular Khyber Jezailchis {Jezail stands for local manufactured rifle}. Comprising of two companies in which one was composed of Malik Din Khel Afridi and other from Zakkha Khel. The Rifles itself draws its name from the famous pass and since its inception it has remained here thus the history of the Rifles is in fact the history of the Pass, history of the tribes inhabiting it and the international relations between the British India and the Afghanistan as part of Great Game.

Khyber Pass

Pass it self can be classified into three main portion from east the initial part from Jamrud – Shagai with Baghiari defile overlooking the entrance it is known as lower Khyber , from Shagai- Landi Kotal is the central Khyber and then from Landi Kotal –Landi Khanna as the lower Khyber.

Khyber Pass is inhabited by one major and most populous tribe the Afridi from Jamrud till Landi Kotal , Landi Kotal is the home of Shinwari another pathan tribe which extends into Afghanistan. Afridi's are restricted into the east of pass. Two minor tribes

Shillman and Mullagori are also living north and north east of the pass. The Kabul River marks the northern boundaries of the pass

Physically the pass has a length of 33 miles extending from Jamrud which is eight miles west of Peshawar having an elevation of 1900 feet, traversing west ward through a gradual ascend amidst barren and rocky mountains in a continuous slow and gradual climb passing through Shagai which is at 3000 feet elevation and then the narrowest part of pass at Ali Masjid couple of miles west of Shagai, again opening up and reaching Landi Kotal which is at 3500 feet and the highest point of the pass it is a plateau and from here a descend starts which takes a traveller down to Michni and into Landi Khanna which marks the culmination point of the pass ; eight miles west of Landi Kotal. Going through the pages of history one has recorded the countless invaders going through them, surprisingly there are no ancient ruins along the Khyber Pass to validate this claim.

Khyber Pass is thirty miles in length from west-east, as one is coming with flow of Kabul River then almost fifteen miles northwest the Kabul river takes a northerly bend and then after another fifteen miles passes through Hindukush. And another fifty miles before it joins Indus River. However at the first bend a small stream also joins it which is going down from Torkham, if the traveller or invader wants to reach Indus then he can walk/ride these thirty odd miles in a night but by following Kabul River it cannot cross Hindukush in one night; thus Khyber Pass became a pass for invaders and Kabul river for trade; this is still how it is now even.

The pass and Afridi have become synonym to each other, Afridi is also an Aryan tribe, it have eight clans and among them following habitats Khyber and adjoining, Kuki Khel, Zakka Khel , Kambar Khel, Malik Din Khel, Sipah, Shalobar , Aka Khel. The other tribes of Khyber are Shinwari, Mullagori and Shilman but they are on the northern side and even among tem only Shinwari are in great strength but still no match to Afridi. One thing in common among all of them is that they all are Muslims and practice Sunni fiqah.

The Afridi are a famous, large and powerful tribe, they live in the area called Tirah, which is about 900 square miles of hilly country, to their west is the Province of Ningrahar, and to their south lies Kurrum Agency. The Afridis are divided into eight major clans: Adam Khel, Aka Khel, Kamar Khel, Kambar Khel, Kuki Khel, Malikdin Khel, Sipah and Zakha Khel. The major portion of the Afridi tribe lives on east of Durand Line, with the exception of a small portion of the Zakha Khels, who have their villages in Ningrahar Province across the mountain, through which the Durand Line is marked.

Khyber Pass is the artery of civilizations which flow with the flow of water. Here Kabul River enters into the plains by flowing through Hindukush in a gentle manner. River Kabul has water of Turch Mir & Pamirs and with it came Aryans 2000BC from the northern highlands, then came Alexander the Great 323 BC and he also opted this , but he came from the south , Greece, Nile, Tigris, Mesopotamia, Persia up till Amu Darya and then to Khyber Pass. He thus brought a collection of all known civilization, artists, writers, and warriors,

women whose intelligence & beauty was the best. Alexander never actually went through this pass but his followers opted this pass.

They{ Greeks} then settled down along the pass as it became the artery of civilizations. These are now known as Afridi, out of the eight clans the two who lives astride it Kuki Khel & Zakkha Khel are the most numerous, Kuki holds the eastern mouth and Zakkha Khel the western. Shinwaris are on the northern edge in majority confronting Zakkha khels, the Shilman and Mullagori , all these five are collectively known as Khyberis.

They have the best of everything, good honourable men, liberal, realistic, most prosperous traders. Shakespeare of Pashtu, Hamza Shinwari is buried here; he is to Khyber what Robert Burns is to Scotland. As late as in 1957 they shot travellers/foreigners for taking pictures of them without permission. These two clans Kuki Khel & Zakha Khel have the lion's share in world's drug market. Zakha Khel cultivates poppy and Kuki Khel process it and smuggle it to anywhere in world . Haji Ayub Afridi Kuki Khel is a legend in his own way, as a khassadar he fired on Nehru in Peshawar in 1946 and then emerged as the king of heroin, today there is a village named after him; Ayub Afridi cannot be termed as criminal in any sense because he fought his case in USA by going there on his own and won a clean chit.

History

The Khyber Pass has a history of its own and it is the most famous of all the passes that leads to Indus Valley from the highlands of Central Asia; it is the gateway to the India and present day Pakistan. Tribes living astride the Hindu Kush are descendents of the same Aryan stock which migrated from the Central Asia. They all are invariably interlink with each other in one way or the other, with minor difference of origin.

The name Khyber has its history interlink with the early days of Islam. Battle of Khyber near Medina is one of the most famous ghazwa of that era and Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed stands out as the most coveted and successful general of Islam . The oral native history thus claims to have a direct link with these two names, they accepted Islam on the hands of Khalid bin Waleed. In another such local oral history the famous Ali Masjid which is the narrowest part of the pass is named after the conqueror of Khyber of Medina Hazrat Ali , the mosque is named after him.

Empirically it is difficult to accept these oral histories because Hazrat Ali never led an army so far neither did Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed. However this particular history highlights the tribal pride in being associated with the great warriors of Islam; around this tribal pride revolves the history of pass and that of Khyber Rifles. Islam made its mark with Arabs chasing Persians and defeating the alliance of Chinese and Turk in a series of battles ranging from 650 -750 AD; fought west of Khyber Pass. East of pass were non Muslim Aryans stretching their rule over present day Chitral, Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Population was very thin and so was the density thus a gradual wave of Islam spread with tribes astride Hindu Raj clashing with the Muslim Turks. Sebukteegain and his son Mahmud

Qutaibah ibn Muslim between 710-715 conquered the Central Asia especially the Bactria and Ferghana valley the heart land of the Turks, Samarkand and Bukhara came under Muslim rule in 715, these Turks were nomadic tribes originating from the Mongolian steppes. In 751 AD a decisive battle between the Muslims and the Turks who also had the support of the Chinese army as well put not only routed Turks but also put an end to the Chinese rule in the area for another thousand years. Turks established the first Islamic dynasty in Central Asia under the name of Samanids. By 1100 AD an Islamic state was established in India with capital at Delhi under the Turk sultans; the real history of Khyber starts from now.

For next three centuries the invaders like Chengiz Khan and Tamerlane passed through this range and pass and finally it was Babur of Ferghana who in 15th century crossed the pass and established the Mughul rule in India. Babur and his descendants have one unique quality they all almost wrote autobiography and biography which sheds light on the history of this pass. Mughul rule had its roots in central Asia and thus Pass became important, many attempts were made to have it properly secured under its control but they all partially succeeded, insurgency and rebellions were faced by them and till the end of this empire in 18th century the tussle continued. It was Akbar the Great's engineer Qasim Khan who is attributed with constructing the road on Khyber which was fit enough for vehicular traffic in 1581.

In 1739 invasion of India was carried out by Persian Nadir Shah who naturally adopted the southern passes of Kandahar but decided to move westward after ravaging Delhi through the Khyber Pass, he met stiff resistance in the pass and although in the subsequent rule of Ahmed Shah Abdali the Kabul had its authority extended till the Sutlej River having Peshawar, Lahore, Kashmir and Multan under its control; yet the Khyber Pass was never under the Kabul's control, it was free and belonged to the Afridis. Ahmed Shah died in 1773 and succeeded by his son Timur Shah who ruled peacefully for another twenty years till when he died in 1793. It was he who constructed the post which is now infamous as the Tamerlane prison; it is precisely at the same defile where the Mughul massacre took place almost a hundred years ago.

Islamic Renaissance 1761-1849

The Central Asian Muslims brought down their version of Islam which they have learned from the Arabs who first invaded the central Asia in 651 AD. Central Asia or the Turks became the Caliph makers and their cultural heritage revolving round the mountains and horses was absorbed into the desert based tradition of Arab Islam. The Turk brand of Islam soon became popular as Sufism; a more liberal and musical based inspirational meditation. Central Asia had the past trade and commerce ties with India and as such this Islam was the state Islam. British or the Christians arrival change the scenario as these were the people of

book and as such different from Kafirs. More so the Islamic history is based upon the fact that the Christians helped Muslims in the early and difficult days of Islam.

Shah Waliullah {1703-1762} & Ibn Abdul Wahab {1703-1792}

Qutab Din Ahmed Ibn Abdul Rahim known as Shah Waliullah has the distinction of saving the mogul empire for few more decades and destroying the rise of Hindus for another 180 years when India was given freedom. Shah Waliullah was also a religious thinker and preacher and it was he who invited the Ahmed shah Abdali to come down to India in the name of jihad. Abdali did acme and in the decisive battle of Panipat 1761 he inflicted crushing defeat upon marhattas. Shah Waliullah traces his bloodline to second caliph Umar. He performed his hajj in 1731 where he stayed for over a year, Shah Waliullah belongs to the Naqsbandia sect of Sufism.

Ibn Wahab, was an Arab scholar and religious reformer , he was at Mecca at the same time when Shah Waliullah was there and attended and received education from the same teacher yet both have not mentioned about each other in their work. Both played decisive role in the future of their respective motherland and on Islam. Ibn Wahab had a political pact with the Saud family of Najd, under which both affirmed to take up Jihad . This pattern was closely followed and applied by Syed Ahmed Bareilvi Shaheed. Fundamentally the key difference between the Ibn Wahab's teaching and the practice of Islam in India was in the fact that in India the saints and their shrines along with their successors were and are still held in high esteem where as no such decorum is practiced in Wahabism also known as ahle Sunnah. Another prominent feature was their non acceptance of Shiaism.

Sikh Empire {1799-1846}

Sikhism took birth in Punjab in 1520 A,D; and despite having Muslim Sufi saints teachings as part of their religion they were treated at times harshly by the Mughals notably by the Aurangzeb not purely on religious grounds but it also had the spice of royal politics as well. In 1762 Ahmad Shah Abdalli's forces on their way back after plundering Delhi were attacked by the Sikh Misls which were concentrated east of River Jhelum . 1799 marks the end of Afghan Empire when Sikh's under Ranjeet Singh entered into Lahore and slowly but gradually the Afghan Empire started shrinking .In 1818 Multan was captured and in 1819 Kashmir was also taken away from Kabul by Ranjeet. Sikhs entry towards the west of Indus started with the capitulation of Mankera and its nawab in 1822, very next year Ranjeet Singh marched across Indus and marched through Isa Khel and Marwat territory, in 1836 Bannu was made part of the Sikh empire after the defeat of Nawab of Dera. In between Ranjeet had a treaty of friendship with British in 1809

In 1818 Peshawar was captured and it was annexed in 1823. In 1834 Sikhs overpowered Afghans at Nowshehra; and Peshawar along with Kohat came under their control. It was at Jamrud in 1837 that this tide was checked and with the death of Ranjeet Singh in 1839 the Sikh Empire similar to so many other empires stared at the writing on the wall. Sikhs did not had an easy and comprehensive control over the territory and people

living on the Western bank of River Indus yet through a blend of diplomacy and militancy Ranjeet was able to have his forces in Peshawar¹ and for a short time had the control over the Khyber Pass as well. The Kabul and Lahore thus remain embroiled in a constant war of attrition. Kabul.

Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa were the two well known administrators of Peshawar under Sikh rule. Raja Tej Singh ruled for six years and in 1845 General Sardar Sher Singh was at Peshawar.

Sikh empire had a short life but it had a deep impact on the coming events, it was an independent kingdom not subject to King of Delhi or the East India Company, Sikh at their own under some of the most brilliant generals including Hari Singh Nalwa took the Afghans head on and pushed them back. He was finally beaten by the favoured son of Dost Muhammad; Akbar Khan in 1837 at Ali Masjid.

From 1800 onwards till 1849 the Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjeet Singh created a Sikh empire in Lahore which expanded west ward. It had the Peshawar under its control from 1826 onwards but it never marched beyond Ali Masjid. It was at this critical juncture that the British interest in the Khyber Pass took birth.

Great Game & Forward Policy

The political and military rivalry of European continent also had its effects on the sub continental politics, initially British had apprehensions about the Napoleon's advance towards the India which were later replaced by the Russians after the treaty of Vienna in 1815.

History of Afghanistan starts with the assassination of Persian Emperor **Nadir Shah in 1747**, Nadir Shah stands as high in history as Napoleon in later years, he expanded north and eastward, thus including the present day Afghanistan as far as beyond Oxus and in further east had Delhi under his subjugation which he plundered once.. Ahmed Khan was one of his favourite general, in the confusion that arose after the assassination; Ahmed made good use of the incoming caravan full of royal jewels and rode off to the Afghanistan, a born leader of men. He just had five hundred men with him and a treasure with this he found an empire ; the present day Afghanistan, which again had Delhi under its control and all the area between Kabul and Delhi including Multan and Sind , in the north he went beyond Oxus. Inj the west had Persian province of Khorasan under him with Shah Rukh grand son of Nadir shah ruling as his deputy.

¹Khullar, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. {Hem, New Delhi,1980}. pp-48-52, pp 121-129

Timur Shah died leaving behind 23 sons and 13 daughters, he was succeeded by his son Zaman Shah, there was secessionist movements going on with half brother Mahmud holding Herat in the west and Humayun another half brother who was governor of Kandahar was finally beaten in the battle ground by the only real brother of Shah Zaman; the Shah Shuja.

By this time in history the area West of present day Afghanistan was a conglomeration of independent small valley states all Islamic in nature like Khiva and Merv², these were captured by the Russians therefore British in order to keep an eye on the affairs wanted to have a friendly and a subservient ruler in Kabul which was at time under control of a Pathan, **Dost Muhammad{ 1793 – 1863}**.

British failed in diplomacy to achieve their aim and therefore the **First Anglo Afghan War in 1839**. Ranjeet Singh did not allow large scale troops of BEIC to march through his territory which was the most feasible in terms of logistics, that stands out as a master piece of diplomacy. British East India Company{BEIC} a commercial venture were initially content with the dominion in the east but the threat of Napoleon in 1800 onwards compelled them to plunge into the western affairs, treaty with Persians in 1805 and then the Russian influence & invasion's fear forced them to have a puppet regime in . First Afghan War was mainly to restore Herat to the loyal Shah Shuja of Kabul. They opted to have the forces march towards the south of Afghanistan from the southernmost pass of India the Bolan Pass. The expedition succeeded in its mission and a regency was established in Kabul but all hell broke loose on 2nd November 1841 when the regency was attacked, burnt and destroyed over pay issue. British troops, officers and their families along with followers were allowed to leave the Kabul for Jalalabad under General Elphinstone leaving behind six hostages including Colonel Warburton senior. The Force never even made it to the Jalalabad which is the midpoint between Kabul and Khyber Pass, it was practically killed, maimed, destroyed by the natives at will , the way a vulture looks at its prey There was only one survivor Doctor Brydon who managed to drag the Jalalabad garrison with sheer will power. Out of the original 16000 troops[{4500 troops and 12000 followers} only one escaped death to narrate the events, this was the single most worst military disaster that felt upon the BEIC since their formation.³

The First Anglo Afghan war did achieve for a brief time a friendly Afghan ruler, the Shah Shuja at Kabul, however Afghans revolted against Shah Shuja and British Consulate at Kabul was burnt in 1841⁴, thus ended the sphere of influence in Afghanistan for the British, Dost Muhammad was back to throne and this time he ruled till his death in 1863.

²Anila, Bali .*THE RUSSO-AFGHAN BOUNDARY DEMARCATION 1884-95:BRITAIN AND THE RUSSIAN THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF INDIA*, {School of Humanities, University of Ulster.Thesis submitted for the degree of D.Phil.1985}. pp 25-27

³ Ibid p,64

⁴Azmat,Hayat, *The Durand Line its Geo-Strategic Importance* { Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar,2000} pp 63-64

Khyber Pass in true sense now became the life saviour blood line for the British prestige and the very stake of India depends upon its being in friendly hands.

Khyber Pass November 1839

2nd November 1839, we are two miles ahead of Dacca , we have entered the gorge of the Khyber Pass and encamped at Landi Khanna, on the heights upon our right an old ruined fortification is carried along the crest of the hill known as Torkham. In the evening I walked through the most romantic glen that I ever saw⁵.

3rd November,{Landi Khanna – Ali Masjid} a long walk for camels and baggage a very difficult march the first three miles being a steep ascent by a well constructed shelf road winding up....on the summit where there is a good breadth of tableland almost every spot appears under cultivation and there are several small forts each having a mud watch-tower attached, on a high mound or rather on the shoulder of a hill stands one of those topes ; supposed to be the burial place of the Bactrian monarchs at a small distance it has the appearance of a Martello tower, the rough stone wall encircling the remains is still in good preservation. On the summit a rough Khyber watch tower has been erected...we encamped on the shingly bed of a stream, one and half miles below the fort at Ali Masjid. The fort is not strong but has a good breast work and the situation is admirably chosen so as completely to command the passage of defile; not even an animal could get by undiscovered or a man passed unscathed who omitted to pay tribute to the chief of the Khyberees.

Massacre at Ali Masjid ‘ Sally Musgrave’.

On 1st November 1839 the Ali Masjid fort which was under the Sikh occupation with one native infantry and one Nazib Battalion{ Muslims employed by Sikh}, the Nazib battalion was at the summit when it was attacked, it ran short of ammunition and while retreating it was attacked by Khyberis ‘swooped down like lightning upon them and either killed or dispersed the whole battalion which consisted of eight hundred men..two hundred and sixty have been buried and about two hundred made their way to Peshawar; of the remainder nothing is unknown’. Captain Lowe visited the site which was half a mile away from his camp ; stench from the partially buried bodies was so great that it was barely possible to remain there. The back ground of this massacre reflects upon the history and causes of violence in the pass. Colonel Wade the British official at Lahore had promised the Khyberis while he was passing through in 1839 for the payment of allowances and tributes, when he was travelling back from Kabul to Peshawar he was reminded again by the Khyberis of his past commitment, colonel Wade again made a promise but it was never fulfilled and resultantly the massacre took place. ‘The chiefs honourably fulfilled their promise, several

⁵ . The Journal of the United Service Institute of India. October 1938, Volume LXVIII, No.293, *A Visit to Peshawar 100 years ago, Diary of Captain Lowe* . pp, 476-482.

small parties of officers passed through the Khyber and not one was molested or interfered with, to use the term of the chiefs, women and children might carry gold through the pass'.⁶

Words and commitment have certain honour in the pass, the Afridi on their part always stood by the words given as is obvious from their conduct since this massacre as long as the other party sticks to their words.

Annexation of Punjab 1849

After the death of Ranjeet Singh the Sikh empire collapsed after waging two wars against the British, First Anglo – Sikh War { 1845 – 1846 } which resulted in cessation of certain areas of Punjab to the British including Kashmir, the resultant Second Anglo - Sikh war { 1848 – 1849 } resulted in annexation of Punjab by the BEIC, with Sir Henry Lawrence { 1806 – 1857 } and his 'Young Men' now trying to govern the Punjab especially the North Western Frontier. Punjab was divided into ten administrative divisions each headed by a commissioner having two or three districts under him with a deputy commissioner in charge. Peshawar Division was one such division and so was the Dera Jat which comprised of Dera Ismail Kahn and Dera Ghazi Kahn. Bannu was part of DI Khan and only in 1861 it was given the status of a district.

Thus on the eve of British annexation of Punjab the main opposition was from the mujahedeen which were settled in the east of Peshawar. On the other hand the tribes of Waziristan had nothing to do with these mujahedeen so were the other Pashtu speaking tribes of Khyber. This area of mujahedeen in the Swat, Buner, Dir, Hazara later became their stronghold with their leaning towards the Wahabism. Historically thus Frontier campaigns can be classified into two broad categories one which were sent to deal with these mujahedeen, the most famous being the Ambella Pass and Black Mountains. On the other hand the tribes of Waziristan were led by their own khans which did not have the religious fervor or colour rather they were fought

First Afghan –Anglo Treaty 1855.

A treaty was signed between the John Lawrence chief commissioner of Punjab and Dost Muhammad the Walee of Kabul at Peshawar on 30th March 1855, it had three articles and it was a treaty in which both parties expressed perpetual peace and friendship, not to intervene in each other's territories and also acknowledging the sovereignty of each other over their respective areas, Dost Muhammad agreed to be an 'enemy of enemies of

⁶ The Journal of the United Service Institute of India. October 1938, Volume LXVIII, No.293, *A Visit to Peshawar 100 years ago, Diary of Captain Lowe*. pp, 476-482.

honourable East India Company'⁷. Another treaty was signed in Peshawar on 26th January 1857, in which British agreed to pay the Dost Muhammad one lakh rupees per month for his assistance against the Persian which had captured Herat along with 4000 muskets⁸.

Second Anglo-Afghan War & Treaty of Gandamask – 1878.

Second Afghan War started because in London the policy makers now adopted the forward policy. 'coming of the Conservatives in power in 1874. Lord Lytton became the new Governor General in India. The Forward Policy was pursued {by new governor General Lytton} and the tension grew... a mission under Neville Chamberlain left for Afghanistan, but on 25 August 1878 it was not permitted by the Afghan soldiers at the Khyber Pass to enter Afghanistan'⁹

Thus a military expedition was carried out 'to remove all anxiety about India's north western frontier... decision for war has been taken'¹⁰. The war itself was a replica of First Anglo Afghan war , however reinforcement from India finally compelled the Yakub Khan{son of Sher Ali who had fled Afghanistan} the Amir of Kabul to a treaty signed at Gandamask , a British military camp approximately 79 miles south west of Kabul on 30th May 1879. He agreed to assign the districts of Pishin & Sibi in south and Kurram in the centre along with accepting British control over Khyber Pass. He also surrendered his rights as an independent nation to undertake foreign policy with other powers, in short he became a vassal of Calcutta. Yakub Khan also agreed to have the British mission at Kabul.

His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies agrees to conduct his relations with Foreign States in accordance with the advice and wishes of the British Government. His Highness the Amir will enter into no engagements with Foreign States, and will not take up arms against any Foreign State, except with the concurrence of the British Government. On these conditions the British Government will support the Amir against any

⁷ Ibid ,p 246

⁸ Ibid 248.

⁹Dr Sultan-I-Rome *The Durand Line Agreement (1893): Its Pros and Cons*,

WWW.VALLEYSWAT.NET,accessed on 26th January , 2011

¹⁰Durand line ,pp 110-112 also see Aslam Khattak, *A Pathan Odyssey*, {Oxford,Karachi,2000} pp,70-71. Also see,Muhammad Qaiser Janjua. ["In the Shadow of the Durand Line; Security, Stability, and the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan"](#). Naval Postgraduate School, Monterrey, California,pp 66-67.

foreign aggression with money, arms, or troops, to be employed in whatsoever manner the British Government may judge best for this purpose. Should British troops at any time enter Afghanistan for the purpose of repelling foreign aggression, they will return to their stations in British territory as soon as the object for which they entered has been accomplished.

With a view to facilitate communications between the allied Governments and to aid and develop intercourse and commercial relations between the two countries, it is hereby agreed that a line of telegraph from Kurram to Kabul shall be constructed by and at the cost of the British Government, and the Amir of Afghanistan hereby undertakes to provide for the protection of this telegraph line.

In consideration of the renewal of a friendly alliance between the two States which has been attested and secured by the foregoing Articles, the British Government restores to his Highness the Amir of Afghanistan and its dependencies the towns of Kandahar and Jelalabad with all the territory now in possession of the British armies, excepting the districts of Kurram, Pishin and Sibi. The revenues of these districts, after deducting the charges of civil administration, shall be paid to His Highness the Amir.

The British Government will retain in its own hands the control of the Khyber and Michni Passes, which lie between the Peshawar and Jelalabad districts, and of all relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with these passes. The British Government agrees to pay to His Highness the Amir and to his successors an annual subsidy of six lakhs of Rupees.

Despite the treaty the Afghans again revolted and scenes similar to First war were re-enacted, 'A rebellion took place and the Mission's members were killed on 3rd September 1879'¹¹ the British thus concluded that without having a King in Afghanistan who is reliable to their cause and also accepted to the Afghans problem of Afghanistan will remain agitated, Yakub Khan was put into exile in India. The British Viceroy in India, Edward Robert Lytton Bulwer had three choices: to annex Afghanistan and declare it a part of the British Empire, to make Afghanistan a strong British ally, or disintegrate Afghanistan into small independent states. All these options were rejected by London,¹² and instead Abdur Rehman nephew of Sher Ali who had been in exile in Russia was put on throne on 22 July 1880

Between 1849-1879 the pass remained under the control of Central government at Calcutta, however it remained closed for all practical purpose even the mail for Kabul used to go via the Kabul River track known as Tartara route. It was opened only once when Amir Sher Ali Khan visited Amballa Durbar in 1869.

¹¹ Sultan Rome, *Durand Line* 1893,p 36.

¹² Abdur Rehman Khan," http://www.1911encyclopedia.org/Abdur_Rahman_Khan

Khyber Rifles

Khyber Rifles{KR} has the oldest and one of the most chequered history among all the corps of Frontier Corps{FC}. They are the oldest component of FC, raised in 1879 as an irregular tribal force comprising of some 300 odd Afridi tribesmen with a single aim to keep the historic pass open year around and to ensure the safe passage of caravans and more importantly the British army for its subsequent operations against Afghanistan. When the occasion arrived in 1919 with the start of Third Afghan War the soldiers deserted en mass resulting in the disbandment of the corps.

It was raised again in 1941 as Afridi Battalion and took part in the war mainly carrying out protective duties in the rear. It was again disbanded in 1946 at Sialkot and Khyber Rifles were re-raised at the same station and stationed at their home town of Landi Kotal where they are present till now. It took part in the 1965 Pakistan-India war and was awarded a Sitara-e-Jurat, it had its share of action in the 1971 Pakistan-India war mainly on eastern front. Till the start of war against terror in 2001 it was mainly occupied in keeping peace on the border and quelling the odd miscreant in the agency; which had gain notoriety in drugs all over the world. However since 2005 when FC came under operational control of army the KR have been busy all over the tribal areas in hunting the terrorists in collaboration with other corps and army. In the process no less than sixty scouts have embraced shahadat and over two hundred have been injured.

Sur Lakkai

Khyber Rifle's main fame is in its holding and guarding the historic pass Khyber, and being a host to a galaxy of native and foreign dignitaries who visits the pass they range from field marshalls, emperors, crown princes, queens, generals, admirals, sportsmen, actors, clergy, writers , premiers, presidents, air marshalls, politicians to name few.

It was in early 1881 that a full jirga of Afridi clan was held at Peshawar in which the independence of the tribe was recognized and allowances agreed {rupees 85,860 for the Khyber Afridi}, government to take the toll and clan to provide the force for maintaining order and peace on the pass¹³. This force was Khyber Jezailchi which comprised of native Khyber Afridi and paid by the British.

Khyber Rifles initially had strength of 400 footmen and 48 mounted on horse , later it increased to 550 in 1881, with Sardar Aslam Khan Saddozai, he in turn was under command of the political officer of Khyber Rifles which almost eighteen years was Colonel Warburton. Thus the first twenty years of Rifles history is a history of these two men who led, reorganize and expanded the Khyber Jezailchis. Malik Afridi Khan was the second in

¹³ Colonel H.C.wylly from the Black Mounatin to Waziristan, first edition, 1912, reprint.Sang e Meel publishers , Lahoire, 2003, pp-184-185.

command. The natives used to call it Sur Lakkai {red tail}¹⁴ for the reason that the Jezailchis wore the native dress but as a mark of distinction they would put on a red cloth on their turban thus the nick name. In other words it was a levies because they were not issued with any government rifles and only free ration was admissible the pay being paid directly to the clans under silladari system.

One of the early task of Khyber Jezailchis was to protect the cattle garzing of Zakkha Khel , one company was permanently deployed at Besai Ridge, it was rotated every month, food was supplied to it from Jamrud.

In April 1888 two new companies of Jezailchis were raised there by increasing the total number to eight. The two new companies No.6 a Mullagori Shillmani Company and No.7 was known as Bazar Valley Company comprising of Zakkha Khel Afridi. ‘ They are not perhaps such fine men as that of other Afridi companies...i could raise Khyber rifles to a body of 2000 men’¹⁵. The annual cost of two companies was Rupees 32,000. Each company had 99 all ranks with one subedar, one jemadar, four havildars, one naik and eighty eight sepoy. Pay of a jemadar was rupees 20-35 per month with variation depending upon the allowances. The sanction was given in May 1888 for the raising of these companies.

In February 1888 the construction of a defensible serai at landi Kotal was acceded by the government of Punjab and government of India sanctioned it¹⁶, the estimated cost was rupees 1,90,102.

In January 1891 the Khyber Rifles were issued with Snider rifles, they were issued with 288 such rifles during the Black Mounatin expedition. On the death or discharge of any sepoy the rifle was atken back and given to the new entrant. The storage of ammunition nfor Snider at Jamrud was allowed in 1890 by the commander in chief. It is worth mentioning taht first line ammunition was 10 rounds per rifle .¹⁷

There were 73 murders and 30 attempted murders in Peshawar District in 1883.

Between 1880 -1897 there were no less than 16 Frontier expeditions and leaving Chitral {1895} all other were in the vicinity of Peshawar. The very first Afridi uprising had taken place at Dara Adam Khel in 1877 when Jowaki Afridi block the Dar Adam Khel. Most notable was the Shinwari revolt of 1883 against the Amir of Kabul. The Shilman tribe numbered around 700 and Mullagori were 600 men in 1882.

Water Trouble. Between 1878 – 1881 the troops at Jamrud utilised the water approximately 12 hours daily , the water belong to Kuki Khel and after four years of negotiations the agreement was reached under which the compensation was paid {rupees

¹⁴ Colonel sir George Warburton, eighteen years in the Khyber 1879-1898, first published 1900, reprint, sang e meel, 2007, p-94.

¹⁵ Letter No.6., File No.15, Peshawar archive. Letter from Colonel Warburton to secretary to government of Punjab.

¹⁶ Letter No.51, Peshawar Archives, File No.17. Box No, 21.

¹⁷ Letter No.649, 11th December 1890 Foreign Department. Peshawar archives.

5000} and it was further agreed that troops can use water for one day in a week by paying rupees 150 per month to the tribe.

In April 1879 the portion between Jamrud –Landi Khanna was transferred to Punjab Government. Major Hastings was the first political officer of Khyber with Mr Merv as his deputy at Ali Masjid. Before the signing of treaty of Gandamak as part of second afghan war, on 22 November 1878 the Landi Kotal was attacked by Malik Wali Muhamamd Zakkha Khel who led an Afghan force towards Ali Masjid via Bazar Valley, thus resultantly Ali Masjid had fallen into the hands of British on 25th November 1878}. Captain Warburton became the political officer of Khyber on 31st July 1879. Landi Kotal in August 1879 had two British regiments, three native infantry regiments, two companies of sapper and miners and troop of Bengal lancers along with two companies of Khyber Jezailchis; soon cholera spread out at Landi Kotal, there were dead corpses of animals everywhere with over 1000 carcass lying. In 1818 the troops were withdrawn from Landi Kotal and no European was allowed to go beyond Jamrud by 1882 Landi Kotal was in ruins

On 6th September 1879 the leading maliks of the pass including Ahmad Khan Sipah, Sarfraz Khan Malik Din Khel, Abdullah Nur Kuki Khel{he was the oldest age 84 years}, Wali Muhammad Khan Zakkha Khel agreed to be friend of the British and were taken to Peshawar , it was outstanding feat of diplomacy on part of Warburton because only three days earlier the residency at Kabul had been burnt by the natives. Pass now became important.

Caravan travelling in 1882 on the pass was interesting, the caravans would leave simultaneously from Peshawar and Jalalabad, on Monday and Thursday the caravan would enter the pass from Kabul direction and on Wednesday and Saturday from Peshawar towards the Kabul. Ali Masjid was the meeting point of these caravans. From Dakka to Landi Khanna the khassadar of Amir of Kabul provided the protection and from Landi Khanna to Landi Kotal was the responsibility of Khyber Jezailchis. There was no water at Torkham but 20,000 gallons of water was always available at Landi Khanna.

Black Mountain Expedition – 1888

In the same year 1888 the telegraph line was extended from Jamrud – Landi Kotal. ‘ I was treated with courtesy by all the influential men...I saw no sign of hostility either to me or to my work...this can only be attributed to the excellent arrangements made under the commissioner and Commandant Khyber Rifles’¹⁸. The very first telegraph was regarding the Black mountain Expedition. Khyber Rifles volunteered and selected 135 men and officers of Khyber Rifles {with 100 mules} were paraded at Landi Kotal and addressed by Colonel Warburton ‘Do nothing that will bring disgrace or discredit on the Khyber Rifles’.

¹⁸ Peshawar Archives, Box No.13. A.D.S. Assistant superintendent of Telegraphy, Rawalpindi sub division, dated February 15th 1888.

The Khyber Rifles returned to Peshawar on 26 November and halted there for a day, and under Colonel Ommaney's instructions, the municipality of the city of Peshawar gave them a dinner. On 28 November they went to Jamrud. The following native officers and men of the Khyber Corps were awarded with the order of merit for their services in the Black Mountain Expedition.

Subedar Major Mir Akbar Khan Afridi was outstanding for conspicuous gallantry on the many occasions: On 8th October 1888 at the attack on Abu village Black Mountain he with Sepoy Akhtar Shah, in the attack on the Abu village, were the first men to reach the village under a heavy fire, Akhtar was wounded and Mir Akbar single handed charged five or six of the enemy and saved the life of Akhtar. Jamedar Mohammad Challi was another star, On 10 October 1888, during the attack on Khund, Black Mountain, Hazara, he led the attack and was the first man to enter the village. On 28 October 1888, in the vicinity of Thakot, he along with Naik Habib dislodged the enemy from a sanger killing several of their number Sepoy Mian Baz and Sepoy Ajar Din on 1st November 1888 during the storming of the Chorapur Pass, were the first two of the Khyber Rifles to reach the crest. Challi during the withdrawal from Pokal {3rd November} was the last man to leave his position and with great determination he kept the enemy at bay and thus successfully helped his men to retire to safety.

On 31 October 1889, a grand parade was held in the brigade ground. Viceroy distributed the order of merit to the six men of Khyber Rifles for their gallant conduct during the Black Mountain Expedition. It was very impressive parade and the smart turnout was like the Grenadier Guards. However, Just before the presentation of the Indian order of merit to Subedar Mursal, It was discovered that no ribbon had been sent with the medal, but the situation was saved by a Sikh orderly officer to the Viceroy who took off his own ribbon for the Afridi.

In 1891 the Khyber Rifles once again were called to take part in the Black Mountain Expedition, some 300 men of the Khyber Rifles under command of Lt Colonel Aslam Khan C.I.E marched from Jamrud to Peshawar and on 25 February, the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the Khyber Rifles marched out together to take part in the Campaign.

Khyber Rifles & Durand Line. 1893

Khyber Rifles from its inception till to date is closely interlink with the history and events in Afghanistan and even in Iran and areas astride and beyond River Oxus.

Pakistan and Afghanistan both have historical cultural, ethnic and religious ties that spread over a thousand years. The very first Muslim empire established at Delhi in the 11th century was created by the Afghans and in different forms they remained in power or as king makers till the creation of Pakistan, the question then arises , why these two countries

despite having such a strong bond never had good relations¹⁹. One major irritant is the Durand Line the boundary between the two countries that was drawn in 1893 between the British India and the King of Afghanistan and it remained in vogue till to date. Afghanistan raised the issue of Durand Line after the creation of Pakistan in 1947 'almost all Afghan governments have denied the legitimacy of the Durand Line, rejecting the idea that it represents the legal international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan'.²⁰

Sir Henry Mortimer Durand was born at Sehore in Bhopal state on 14th February 1850, he was the second son of Major General Sir Henry Marion Durand [1812-1871]. Henry Durand took an active part in the First Afghan War of 1839 in the assault on Ghazni fort, he was from engineers and went very close to the main gate to put the charge bag and then lit it amidst fire, he later took part in the second Anglo afghan war of 1844, later served as political agent at Bhopal , then in 1march 1857 was in charge of central Indian agency he later in 1858 was the member of the board which carried out reorganization of Indian army at London. He became the foreign secretary of India in 1864 and finally the governor of Punjab where he met an accidental death , he was invited by a local Sikh ruler who took him upon an elephant ride and the entrance was bit low and thus ended a brilliant career, he married twice.

Durand family remained engaged with Afghanistan and its affairs from First AfghanWwar and its final culmination took place in 1893 with the signing of agreement at Kabul between the Amir Abdur Rehman and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, it was the single most important foreign policy decision of the nineteenth century in India or Asia , it averted the war between the England and Russia, it removed the misconceptions nd soon both these countries were fighting hand in hand against the Germans in 1914. The whole afghan issue took birth in 1800.

The "Durand Line Agreement" between Abdur Rehman and Sir Mortimer Durand was signed on November 12th, 1893, which formulated the formal borders between British India and Afghanistan and defined the sphere of influence especially in Waziristan.

Text of the Agreement: Whereas certain questions have arisen regarding the frontier of Afghanistan on the side of India, and whereas both His Highness the Amir and the Government of- India are desirous of settling these questions by friendly understanding, and of fixing the limit of their respective sphere of influence, so that for the future there may no difference of opinion on the subject between the allied Governments, it is hereby agreed as follow:

¹⁹Ali ,Mehrunnisa, Ed, *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1998* {Oxford,Karachi,2001 }pp,330-332.

²⁰ The American Institute of Afghan Studies "The Durand Line: History, Consequences and Future." Nov 2007. http://www.hollingscenter.org/Reports/07-2007_Durand_Line.pdf (accessed January 8, 2011).

1. *The Eastern and Southern frontier of His Highness's dominions, from Wakhan to the Persian border, shall follow the line shown in the map attached to this agreement.*
2. *The Government of India will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of Afghanistan, and His Highness the Amir will at no time exercise interference in the territories lying beyond this line on the side of India.*
3. *The British Government thus agrees to His Highness the Amir retaining Asmar and the valley above it, as far as Chanak. His Highness agrees, on the other hand, that he will at no time exercise interference in Swat, Bajaur, or Chitral, including the Arnawai or Bashgal Valley. The British Government also agrees to leave to His Highness the Birmal tract as shown in the detailed map already given to His Highness, who relinquishes his claim to the rest of the Waziri country and Dawar. His Highness also relinquishes his claim to Chageh {Chagheh}.*
4. *The frontier line will hereafter be laid down in detail and demarcated, wherever this may be practicable and desirable, by joint British and Afghan commissions, whose object will be to arrive by mutual understanding at a boundary which shall adhere with the greatest possible exactness to the line shown in the map attached to this agreement, having due regard to the existing local rights of villages adjoining the frontier.*
5. *The above articles of agreement are regarded by the Government of India and His Highness the Amir of Afghanistan as a full and satisfactory settlement of all the principal differences of opinion which have arisen between them in regard to the frontier; and both the Government of India and His Highness the Amir undertake that any differences of detail, such as those which will have to be considered hereafter by the officers appointed to demarcate the boundary line, shall be settled in a friendly spirit, so as to remove for the future as far as possible all causes of doubt and misunderstanding between the two Governments.*
6. *Being fully satisfied of His Highness's good will to the British Government, and wishing to see Afghanistan independent and strong, the Government of India will raise no objection to the purchase and import by His Highness of munitions of war, and they will themselves grant him some help in this respect. Further, in order to mark their sense of the friendly spirit in which His Highness the Amir has entered into these negotiations, the Government of India undertake to increase by the sum of six lakhs of rupees a year the subsidy of twelve lakhs now granted to His Highness.²¹*

Amir Abdur Rahman had also stated that:

"The province of Wakhan, which had come under my dominion, I arranged to be left under one portion of Waziristan came under my rule, and I renounced my claims from the railway station of New Chaman, Chageh, the rest of Waziri, BulundKhel, Kuram, Afridi, Bajaur, Swat, Buner, Dir, Chilas, and Chitral the British for protection, as it was too far from

²¹Azmat, Durand Line, appendix, p 244.

Kabul, and cut off from the rest of my country, and therefore very difficult to be properly fortified. The boundary line was agreed upon from Chitral and Baroghil Pass up to Peshawar, and thence up to Koh Malik Siyah in this way that Wakhan, Kafiristan, Asmar, Mohmand of Lalpura, and. The Amir further states that: "The misunderstandings and disputes which were arising about these frontier matters were put to an end, and after the boundary lines had been marked out according to the above-mentioned agreements by the Commissioners of both Governments, a general peace and harmony reigned between the two Governments, which I pray God may continue for ever."²²

Durand Line also marked the boundary of Afghanistan with China where despite the protest of Amir of Afghanistan Abdur Rehman regarding the inaccessibility and difficulty in maintaining Wakhan, a two hundred long and 60 kilometre wide strip was made part of the Afghanistan, thus a British India did not have any direct borders with Russia and Anglo-Sino frontier thus originates from this point. 'everything that happened in Kashmir between 1846 and 1947 was part in some way a product of this strategic policy'²³

The Khyber Demarcation Commission

The first commission, known as the Khyber Demarcation Commission, was designated for the demarcation of the border from the Safed Koh to the Kabul River. The Kurram-Afghan Commission was represented from the British side by the British Commissioner, J. S. Donald and by Sherin Dil Khan from the Afghan side. The border demarcation from Sikaram to Laram was done with minor adjustments to the Durand Line map in favour of the Afghans. Both the British and Afghan representatives sanctioned this border in mid 1895. This included the boundary from Chandak (the southern territory of Chitral) to the Kabul River and between the British Kurram territory and the Amir's area of Khost. The map of the Durand Line Agreement virtually divided the Mohmand Agency in two during the demarcation process. The Amir claimed the whole of Kafiristan and maintained that Bangsal Valley was a part of it. The British, on the other hand claimed that Bangsal Valley was part of Chitral Valley. The British ended the deadlock after surrendering Asmar and the Bangsal Valley of Kafiristan to the Amir thus finalizing a 130-mile border from the Hindu Kush to the vicinity of Nawa Kotal

The **Baluch-Afghan** Commission was responsible for the border demarcation from Domandi to the Iranian border, The boundary from Domandi to Chaman was easily settled by February 16, 1895. The border from Domandi to Persia (the top of Koh-i-Malik-Siah Mountain) was finalized in June 1896.

²² Ibid, pp, 134-144. Also see, Muhammad Qaiser Janjua. ["In the Shadow of the Durand Line; Security, Stability, and the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan"](#). Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, pp 79-82.

²³ Robert Wirsing, *India Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute*. regional conflict & its resolution, {MacMillan, London, 1994} p 186.

Pakistan today is a front line country in war against terror, Pakistan has emerged in all these years as the bastion of Islamic values and on the other hand is the most technological advanced Muslim country in the world; the sole nuclear power of Islamic Ummah. With 160 million population, as such Pakistan needs outlets in the region for its economic prosperity which has been seriously hampered by the events in Afghanistan in last three decades. The emergence of independent Islamic states in Central Asia as an aftermath of the Russian invasion and failure in Afghanistan has opened a new vista for Pakistan as all these states {Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan} are bestowed with abundant natural resources in form of petroleum and natural gas both of which are in dire needs by the Pakistan. The Durand Line extends approximately 1200 miles²⁴ from the Sarikol range in the north to the Iranian border in the southwest. Durand Line has scattered tribes living in the area since long is very scarcely populated yet heavily armed. The provinces of Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are on the eastern side of the Durand Line and form the western border of Pakistan. On Afghanistan's side of the Durand Line are the provinces of Nimruz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabol, Paktika, Paktia, Nangarhar, Konar, Nuristan, and Badakshan Afghanistan

Afridi Uprising - 1897

In 1897 disturbances broke out all along the Frontier. On the request of Colonel Warburton a British second-in-command was appointed in Khyber Rifles. Captain Barton took over just before the Afridi War of 1897. The Afridi's remained quite for some time, but in August they attacked all the Khyber Rifles posts by "Lashker" in great strength (13,500). Most of the Khyber Rifles posts were over run, burnt, but the garrison of Landi Kotal, held under the wounded much decorated Subedar Mursil who had fought at Ambeyla,. He was in command of the fortified serai at Landi Kotal. Mursil had one son with him in the serai and two sons were with the Afridi Lashker when they appeared on the Loargi Plateau about August 25, after having been allowed to burn and sack Shadi Bagair, Fort Maud, Fort Ali Masjid and every post between Jamrud and Landi Kotal. His two sons were sent forward to ask him to surrender, but he refused, and threatened to shoot them down if they did not retire. The Afridi suffered 118 killed and wounded before they were able to secure the serai which was only done when this brave and loyal subedar had been killed by a bullet through his head. The Khyber was augmented to two battalions of six hundred each 50 percent of the total being mounted and were placed under British officers.

Colonel Warburton { 1840-1901}

²⁴MujtabaRazvi, *The Frontiers of Pakistan, a Study of frontier Problems in Pakistan's Foreign Policy* {National, Karachi, 1971} p 143.

History of Khyber Rifles is incomplete without mentioning the name of colonel Warburton, he was son of a colonel Warburton but importantly his mother was an Afghani; the very first instance of such act. The senior Warburton had been part of First Afghan War and got married to the Lady at Kabul in 1840 and junior Warburton was born when the chaos in Kabul was at peak or may be days later.

Colonel Warburton survived the Kabul massacre because he was held hostage by the Afghans along with few other officers and both the lovers then reunited in India. Warburton real fame lies in the fact that he remained political officer of Khyber for well over eighteen years and is credited with the harmony and peace in the Pass which exists till today.

He took Afridi maliks on a tour of India , boarding train from Peshawar and destination was Calcutta. Journey itself took three days.. These Afridi had never been outside the pass and were totally ignorant about the world. They had a grand evening tae with viceroy at Calcutta; the Indians also had the very first glance of the ferocious Afridi for the first time. When I run the scene in my mind it looks like making of a classic comedy. On their return journey they opted for steamer from Bombay to Karachi; all the maliks initially were laughing like school boys but soon all were sea sick. They then travelled to Karachi, Quetta and finally entered the own area from Zhob-Bannu- Peshawar. For years these maliks attained a status of what we have today of ‘Space tourist’.

Warburton like most of the Frontier officers also fell into a fallacy of being indispensable, after his retirement the Afridi uprising started in 1899. He died on a sick bed in England.

Bazar Valley Expedition (Tirah expedition) 1908.

In 1908 the Frontier Corps was engaged against the Zakkha Khel. A detachment of 300 men under Major Roos Keppal along with an equal number of 5th Gurka crossed into Bazar Valley via bazaar. In this expedition Warburton was recalled from retirement. Four men of Khyber Rifles all Afridi acted as his scouts and guides. In this operation, the Khyber Rifles earned two mentioned in despatches.

Mohmand Expedition – 1914 -17

During First World War, detachments of the Frontier Corps were in continuous action against the Mohmand tribes. It was a task given to Khyber Rifles, which was successfully completed. Khyber Rifles not only put up a good show in the battle field but in 1915 **Sepoy Afazal Khan of Khyber Rifles accompanied Sir Aurel Stein to Central Asia as a surveyor.** The desolate ground of Ion-Lan was meticulously surveyed by this Sepoy. These reconnaissance on ground untouched by human feet for many centuries led to the discovery of succession remains to the north east which clearly indicated that the ancient trade and military route to Tur-huang followed that direction , at least in the initial position.

Third Afghan War – 1919

On February 20th, 1919, Amir Habibullah of Afghanistan was slain in his tent near Jalalabad, his third son, Amir Amanullah became the king. On May 3rd, an Afghan army occupied the Khyber Pass. On 6th May British formally declare war and Third Anglo – Afghan War started. The initial success of the Afghans at Bagh convinced the major Pathan tribes in the Khyber, the Afridis and the Orakzais, that it would be safe to attack the British.. In the initial stages of this war Khyber Rifles gave a very good account at Charbagh and Dakka. They successfully held the Afghan advance till the arrival of the regular army. But later on the loyalty of the men was undermined by propaganda. After a number of desertions the men of the Rifles were offered the choice of discharge or serving on. The revolt by their kin proved too much for the Khyber Rifles, who deserted or went over to the Afghans and disbanded on 17th May 1919

Those who opted for discharge numbered 1,180 but no Pathan officer volunteered for discharge. Of the loyal, 145 were absorbed in military, police and some 200 were formed into the Khyber Levy Force, the precursor of Khasadars. Thus for a quarter of century the Khyber Rifles remained extant.

X Afridi Battalion

On 1st January 1942 a new unit was born in the Indian Army under the mysterious title of “X” Garrison Battalion. This Battalion which was the inspiration of H.E Sir George Cuninghame, Governor of the North West Frontier Province, and General Sir Claude Auchinleck, the Commander in Chief and was originally intended for service in Eritrea.

The battalion was raised in Sialkot where it was affiliated to the Frontier Force Regiment and a nucleus of junior and non commissioned officers all natives {VCOs and NCOs} was collected mainly from the Frontier Force. The initial establishment was a headquarters and three companies but this was later expanded to four companies. Lt Col G. Bacon (14 Punjab) was appointed commandant with Major R.N. Bacon (P.A. Khyber) As Second-in Command & Captain _____ (2Punjab Regiment) as adjutant. On these four officers fell the entire burden of raising the battalion. In June 1942 the battalion, having received two more officers Capt H.W Watson(9 Jat Regiment) and 2/ Lt G.Wantnor Smith (6 Rajputana Rifles) to complete its establishment was ordered to proceed overseas not to Eritrea as originally intended, but to incorporation in a commando Corps.

The Battalion stayed five weeks in Syria. It had been organised prior to proceeding overseas into two Wings of two Company each with Captain Letts and Captain Watson as Wing Commanders. Training went on but as no one knew how to employ such a unit no directive could be issued and the deplorable lack of equipment was a difficulty not easily overcome. In August it was transferred to Paiforce and placed under command of Tenth Army .

Lt Col E.E French MC, arrived to take over when command and Subedar Major Gul Akbar left on pension. He had been re-employed for service with the Afridi Battalion and his unselfish efforts and profound human understanding were an invaluable contribution towards giving it such an excellent start. He was succeeded by **Subedar Major Khan Baz**. The spring was spent in Lermanshah and in May, orders were received to return to the Middle East,. The relegation to purely garrison duties again, after the optimism of the spring, was bitter blow . It was during this period on railway protection duty the Major Bacon left to resume his work in the Indian political service and his position as second-in-command was taken by Major Letts.. Nor was this the only loss for at the same time Subedar Major Khan Baz, awarded the O.I.B for his service and Subedar Said Anwar I.D.S.M departed. Subedar Hamesh Gul was appointed Subedar Major.

In May 1944 the battalion was relieved and sent up north. Battalion HQ was established at Tureh near Sultanabad and detachment were sent to Teheran, Kazvim, and Hamdan.. A tragic loss at this period was the departure of Capt R.W.Hodson who had been Adjutant for almost two years and who was recalled by the Indian Political Service.

. On the eve of the new year 1945 Lt Col French departed and Major Letts was promoted Temporary Lt Col and took over command during his absence. Captain D.S Foster and Captain Jehangir Khan (both Frontier Force Regiment) were Adjutant and Quarter Master respectively.

On arrival in India the battalion was sent to Ferozepor where orders were received to move to Sialkot at the end of January 1945 for disbandment. Lt Col J.R.Booth was posted to command through the last closing stages.

No history of the Afridi Battalion could be complete without mention of the excellent work of the Depot Company under the command of Captain Karamatullah. , much credit go to Subedar Bahadur Sher, a re-employed pensioner from the 14th Punjab Regiment .

Chindits of Khyber Rifles

On 1st March 1946 the Khyber rifles were raised at Sialkot by disbanding the Afridi battalions , ‘ the parade was conducted and there were two set of tables , the soldiers of Afridi battalion marched forward handed over their discharge papers and step back. Made a salute and marched six steps forward to another table and picked his new papers of being enrolled in the Khyber Rifles’. On that day 1243 men were a enrolled and all were Afridi. Their average height was 5.8 inches having a chest expansion of 32 inches-34 inches. Further more six hundred new recruits were also enrolled and another two hundred were inducted from the Frontier Constabulary Tochi scouts, South Waziristan scouts. The very first commandant was Lieutenant Colonel J.R.Booth DS and Subedar Major Hamesh Gul Malik Din Afridi had the honour to be the first SM of the Khyber Rifles. Other native officers as they were known included Subedar Awaz Gul also MDK he went on pension in 1953, Subedar Alim Khan again a MDK of Zangi village he retired in 1948. Subedar Major Azim Khan was the next SM a Bakka Khel he retired in 1961.

Second enrolment took place on 8th April 1946 in which men from other scout corps were also inducted. All in all 1762 men were enrolled in Khyber Rifles by the end of 1946. The procedure of enrolment was the same as in other Frontier Corps one has to bring the surety of his malik for enrolment. Overwhelmingly all belong to Afridi or from Khyber. Saida Khan Shinwari was the very first from Shinwari qaum to be enrolled on 21st November 1946 he later on rose to the rank of subedar major before retiring with an exemplary character in 1960. Mullagoris were all having an average age of over 25 years where as the Afridi were in the bracket of 17-19. Mullagoris were in the average height of 5.5-5.7 inches. sepoys were enrolled into the companies with a clan composition for instance Mullagoris were in 3/12 company which means that the 12th platoon of 3rd company was composed of Mullagori, Qambar Khel were in the first company, Daparzai in headquarters company, Zakkha Khel also had the second company for enrolment,. There were Yousafzai also but these were mostly old veteran who were put in the headquarters company like Havildar Muhammad Yusuf Yousafzai, he was 44 years of age. For special trades like armourer and black smith the Punjabi Muslims were also enrolled like Armourer Muhammad Sadiq. On the eve of independence the strength was 1838 sepoys.

Organisation

The Khyber Rifles was deployed at Landi Kotal being the headquarters with one wing at Ali Masjid & Shagai {No.2 Wing under command Major M.C Smith} and other at Landi Kotal { No 1 Wing Major J.Letts he was reverted back to military in March 1947 and was replaced by Major J.M.Penly}. Rifle .303 was the standard weapon and firing it without permission was an offence punishable with fines. The discipline and all other matter were conducted under the 1941 NWFC Law, the section 9{p} deals with the firing of weapon. All promotions in the corps especially that of officers and subedars apart from postings were published in the NWFP government gazette.

Muslims officers included Captain Kararmatullah followed by Captain Jahangir Khan. The pioneer Indian officers{junior commissioned officers} of Khyber Rifles were Subedar Sohbat Khan Kuki Khel, Subedar Ziarat Khan Qambar Khel, Subedar Aka Khel Shah Sipah, Subedar Haider Khan Qambar Khel, Subedar Sheikh Nur Malik Din Khel, Subedar Hasham Ali Zakkha Khel, Jemadar Sadozai Kuki Khel, Jemadar Wazir Shilman, Jemadar Hussain Gul Qambar Khel, Jemadar Lal Akbar Qambar Khel and Jemadar Khiamat Khan Kamrai. They were the nucleus around which the Khyber Rifles took birth in 1946, they all underwent year of probation and they were confirmed in their rank in March 1947. In the same breadth there were retirements also, Jemadar Bahadur Khan MDK and Subedar Fazl Rahim were transferred to pension establishment in the spring of 1947.

Discipline was kept strict from the embryo stage, loss of empty case was a crime having a punishment of rupee one as fine. When the pay of a soldier was rupees 18 per month. There were frequent transfers from one wing to other from one company to the other.

A sepoy had the choice to get his discharge by paying rupees 30/-; it depend upon service as well. Punishment and rewards were the prerogative of the commandant, a wing commander would recommend the soldiers for promotion, on the other hand he would also make a charge sheet for the commandant to award punishment. Absent without leave, over stay leave were the two most common features of soldiers getting punishment. Fourteen days rigorous imprisonment was a normal sentence for over staying leave even if it does not exceed three days in length. Rendering of the government issued items before the expiry of date was another crime. loss of rifle component was again fined with recovery made through the pay. These include even a small component such as screw band inner, nut screw protector or screw plate butt.

Drivers for rash driving were charged and punished as well, driver Payo Shah was deprived of three months driver allowance in mid February 1947 for injuring a soldier of army at Peshawar in mid December 1946, Naik Abdul Majeed had to forfeit his two month driving allowance for rash driving 'he drove a government truck in a negligent manner'.. Lance Naik Ati Khan forfeited three days pay for exceeding speed limit in Landi Kotal camp. Sepoy driver Zangir also had to forfeit his three days pay for driving on right of way without sufficient cause. The aim was to instil the traffic discipline and there is no better and more efficient way than inflicting financial loss. Even use of foul language or insulting manners by a sepoy or any junior to his senior was a charge sheet offense

Breaking of a bulb was another crime punishable with fine, Sepoy Baidar Gul had never seen an electric bulb before and he hit it with a stone to see what is inside he had to pay Rs 2/12/- for the knowledge he gained. If a sentry failed to perform his duty then it was his guard commander who had to face the music, reduced to naik.. But the best is when Lance Naik Kaim Gul was charge on 15th April 1947 the last day of Lieutenant Colonel Booth 's command ' an act prejudicial to good order & military discipline in that he was extremely idle on guard' ; end result was 'deprived of his lance naik rank'.

Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Shariff Khan MBE, took over the command of the Khyber Rifles on 25th April 1947, Khyber Rifles thus have the distinction of being the only Frontier Corps corps to have a native Muslim officer in command on independence. Lieutenant Rahmat Ullah Durrani of FF Rifles joined Khyber Rifles on 24th July 1947.

Lieutenant Colonel Sharif maintained the same high standards of discipline, improper dress for guard duty, failing to report that the telephone at the post is out of order and to ensure that the sentry at his piquet is alert were the charges which resulted in severe reprimand for Havildar Sher Afghan at Piquet 3040 on 25th April 1947 , the very first day of Shariff's command . A subedar on promotion was put on a probation period of one year, a naib subedar was called a Jemadar and a subedar as subedar. . In the absence of commandant the wing commander at Landi Kotal {Major J.Letts} used to perform as the commanding officer. Musketry prizes were meant for good firer, in very such event Havildar Jallat Khan scored 62 points in medium machine gun category, Naik Sherza Khan had the first position in first class with 45 points. Prize generally ranges between rupee one to two. Soldiers were granted two months leave and officers 28 days leave known as War leave within India.

Training of different trade was carried out rigoursly , signallers wee trained at Peshawar Signals it included Morse Code reading, exchange operating. wireless procedures and radio telegraphy; they were judged as good, very good or fair in each category, signal platoon commander was Jemadr Said Amir and he was authorized to draw a special allowance. Their examination included buzz reading, signalling, flag reading, Halio or lamp reading, cable jointing and cells primary.

Company weapon courses were attended at Infantry weapons wing , infantry school at Saugor. The students were graded in knowledge and in instructional ability, a jemadar was authorized a batman in normal course of duty and also while on a course as well, it may comes as surprise but it used to take only three days to move from Landi Kotal and report at Poona. Arsenal stores were brought from Rawalpindi.

An educational establishment was raised in April 1947, there were 15 soldiers who formed part of it headed by Jemadar Safdar Khan and Jemadar Gulab Khan they were given a staff allowance of Rs 10/-pm .

The purchase of mules was conducted from Saharanpur where a party of no less than ten soldiers with a havildar would proceed for purchase from Remount Depot; it would take almost three weeks for the complete exercise. These mules were branded with letter K, Khyber Rifles had the mules having serial number from 800 onwards for instance No.K891 was a mare and K979 was a Gelding mule. Sick animals were treated and admitted at Peshawar veterinary hospital , a mule driver was always required to act as the attendant. In March 1947 mule driver stayed at Peshawar vet hospital with two sick donkeys for almost three weeks and it was counted as duty.

Ration was good and sufficient, soldiers were provided ration at reduced rates , in January 1947 the KR was providing ration at following rates. Atta 3 seers and two chattaks cost one rupee, in same amount a soldier could buy 12 chattaks of sarsoon oil, 11 seers of salt in one rupee , Clerk Shiva another Hindu , an efficient typist he was mainly responsible for typing the Part 2 orders and as such was always held in high esteem by the soldiers. There were few Hindus and Sikhs in Khyber Rifles as well like Bhisti Gulab Singh, Ram Dass, sweeper Walia , Marai, Uda, Nawab and Peshawari, to name few all such trades including dhobi come under the S company. Even Muhammad Ayub dhobi was struck off the strength because he was unlikely to become an efficient dhobi where as Dhobi Zain Gul was retained. There were honorary appointments among the trades, these were purely for keeping discipline and had no effect in pay, only commandant was authorised to make such honorary appointments, recruits after enlistment were posted to the wings who were responsible for training which included mainly firing and drill.

14th August 1947. It was a glorious day, sunny but windy, few clouds hovering over the Tantarra ridge, Subedar Major Azim Khan Qambar Khel and Jemadar Dilawar Khan Kuki Khel were made second lieutenants on this auspicious day.

Kashmir Jihad & Khyber Rifles.

Kashmir, in Sanskrit, implies land desiccated from water: “ka” (the water) and shimeera (to desiccate) Kashmir a land locked Himalayan kingdom comprising of 86000 square kilometres and half a million people all overwhelmingly Muslims, like other princely states, Kashmir was supposed to join one of the dominions but it initially delayed but later the independence wave which started from Poonch soon engulfed the whole of Kashmir. The tribesmen from the tribal areas soon swarmed upon the valley in aid of their Muslim brethren, Jihad was declared and war continued for another year before a cease fire line was agreed upon in January 1949.

In April/May 1948 four platoons of Khyber Rifles under command Subedar Major Azim Khan were sent to Kashmir to participate in the operation along with the lashkar. Soon after the subedar major was replaced by Captain Karamat Ullah Khan, the Adjutant of the Corps. Khyber Rifles was attached with 4 Baluch Regiment now 11 Baluch at Bib Dori. 4 Baluch was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harvey Kelly (later Commandant of South Waziristan Scouts).

In May, June and July active patrolling were carried out to dominate the No Mans Land. During the period a very important ambush was laid. The place selected was Khatir Nar. Two platoons (one from 4 Baluch and one from Khyber Rifles) were selected to lay the ambush. It was a complete surprise and very successful. The Indians suffered fifteen casualties. Arms and ammunition were captured. This ambush had a salutary effect and the Indians became very sensitive and avoided patrolling in the “No Man’s”. Our troops regained the initiative by vigorous patrolling. With the help of lashkar several jittering actions were taken.

By the end of July our own troops and intelligence had a fair idea of enemy dispositions and strength. Therefore, it was decided to plan a big raid however by the middle of August the idea of a big raid was changed into an attack and capture of Pandu. Harvey Kelly, being an Englishman, was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel (Later Major General) Sher Bahadur. Plan originally made by Kelly remained intact with minor modifications.

4 Baluch plus a company of 17 Baluch on night 19/20 August to move to Gujar Bandi – stay put on 20 August (this risk was taken because of Indians timidity in patrolling the “No man’s land” area. On night 20/21 August this force to be divided into columns as under:-

Two companies under Major (Later Lt Col) Hafiz Afridi to capture Pandu Point, a vital ground, (this force consisted of one company ex 4 Baluch and one company ex 17 Baluch). Rest of 4 Baluch under the personal Command of Lt Col Sher Bahadur to capture Pandu Village. Two platoons of Khyber Rifles plus two companies of Muzaffarabad Battalion and Lashkar Mohmand, under Command Major Karamt Ullah Khan to move on night 19/20 August to Nardajian – Kandar Kuzi forest and capture Ring Contour thus blocking the Indians route of withdrawal to Chotta Kazinag and also to mystify the enemy of our main thrust. Two companies of Muzaffarabad Battalion and two platoons of Khyber Rifles to remain in their present positions.

A Lashkar of Mahsud to occupy a position between Pandu village and Point 6873 to cut the route of withdrawal of troops at point 6873. Artillery support to be given by artillery regiment under command Major (Later Brigadier) Shami.

Chronological Events

On night 19/20 August the main force under command Lieutenant Colonel Sher Bahadur moved to the concentration area at Gujar Bandi. This force remained hidden on 20th August in the same place. On night 21/21 August the force moved as planned. One column under Major Hafiz Afridi moved to Pandu Point. This force reached the objective before dawn and occupied the position. Luckily the enemy was not occupying this vital ground although the position had been well prepared by means of strong bunkers.

The rest of the force under Lt Col Sher Bahadur advance to Pandu village by a different route and enroute met opposition and taken by surprise. It was very difficult to assail this unexpected opposition. Taking up positions in darkness and to wait till next morning would have given chance to the Indians to retaliate. Moreover, the main force would have been delayed and thus diverted, from their aim of capturing Pandu village. Lt Col Sher very rightly decided to contain this enemy force with a platoon and skirted this position. Local guides were of great help in this bold and correct decision. By morning of 21 August the main force attacked Pandu village. This position was very strong and on the top of it enemy force at F.1, F.2 and F.3 started withdrawal that day. The Mahsud Lashkar could not effectively block them. This was a very unfortunate thing for our main force because the enemy force withdrawal bumped into it and shot us from behind in order to join their forces at Pandu village. Our main force suffered casualties and enemy forces from F.1, F.2 and F.3 joined their main force. At this juncture news came that our own forces had occupied Pandu point. Again the commander very correctly withdrew his force from this battle and joined own force at Pandu peak. This was vital ground and the enemy at Pandu village came under effective observation and fire from this place.

Karamat Force of Khyber Rifles as it was called also moved from Bib Dori the same night as the main force i.e on 19/20 August. The force reached Nardajia and remained hidden the whole day of 20 August. On night 20/21 August the force marched by a path to Kathar Nar and from there through very difficult terrain of the Kandar Kunzi forest. Due to thick shrubs the movement was very slow, when the force reached a point enroute, the enemy (probably patrol) opened up. After a sharp exchange of fire, the enemy withdrew to his main position at Akram where the fire exchange lasted till the afternoon of 21 August when the place was charged and captured. The enemy left behind a few dead and one prisoner of war, lot of ammunition, food and clothing. Two platoons of Khyber Rifles occupied Akram while the two platoons of Muzaffarabad Battalion were sent to Gul which was also occupied. Patrols were sent to Pandu village which were fired upon. This was a clear indication that Pandu village was still occupied by Indians. The wireless communication broke down with the main force owing to the small set and thick jungle.

The Mohmand Lashkar after the capture of the place, busied themselves in the loot and some bolted with the loot. The Mahsud Lashkar also reached their assigned place but unfortunately they could not block the troops at F-1, F-2 and F-3 from rejoining the main force at Pandu. However, their presence in the area was of immense advantage. The Indians were afraid of them and the use of Chura (Knife) of Waziristan days was still fresh in their minds.

During all these operations, the guns of Major Shami were of immense help and morale boosting. This energetic Officer was to be seen everywhere and remained in the thick of battle throughout.

Vigorous patrolling was carried out on night 21/22 August in order to find out enemy extent and strength at Pandu village. 4 Baluch was ordered to launch an attack on this village on 23 August. At the same time 2/12 FF Regiment was also ordered to join 4 Baluch and to be ready to capture Chota Kazinag. After the capture of Chota Kazinag, Karamat Force was to exploit it upto Chinal Dori. This order was received by all concerned and hectic preparations started.

On night 22/23 August, the Indians started shelling our positions very intensely and every one of us expected an Indian attack that night or at dawn. On the morning of 23 August however, the Indians attack did not come but when 4 Baluch and 2/12 FFR advanced on Pandu village, it was found vacant. The enemy had slipped and this huge shelling was a ruse for the withdrawal of the troops at Pandu village. The enemy had withdrawn via Sufaida Gap – Bala Sethu – Gundigeran.

The enemy left behind huge dump of ammunition, ration and weapons at Pandu. After capture of Pandu liaison was made by the main force with Karamat Force at Akram. On 24 August 2/12 FFR moved via route Akram – Gul to Chota Kazinag. The enemy by then had occupied Chota and had sent patrols up. These patrols were pushed back by 2/12 FF Regiment. In the mean time Karamat Force also followed 2/12 FF Regiment, so that it should be ready at hand to exploit upto Chinal Dori once Kazinag was captured. The day was cloudy and occasionally it was drizzling and visibility was poor. 2/12 FF Regiment steadily advanced and captured point 10425. The company commander was unable to observe the Point 10657, which was only 250 Yards off due to fog and mist. He thus reported that Kazinag had been captured. It was a signal for Karamat Force to advance to Chinal Dori. This was more or less going in single file due to narrow path and sheer cliffs on either side, from point 10657, heavy machine gun fire was encountered and the leading section sustained casualties. The intensity of fire indicated that Kazinag was strongly occupied and also due to the narrow approach to the position it was not considered advisable to pursue the advance. Troops were withdrawn to 2/12 FF position. Two Coys of Muzaffarabad Bn were then sent to Chinal Dori via Chitrian and it was reported that, position was also occupied in strength.

Thus the battle of Pandu ended in the capture of Pandu peak, Pandu village. Chota Kazinag i.e substantial area on account of this operation. Indians also withdrawn from their

Chakthi position in order to straighten up their defence lay out. In this very important operation Khyber Rifles showed its worth and proved that it was second to none.

Khyber Rifles 1950s

In July 1954 the class composition of the KR underwent a drastic change when eight platoons of Afridi replaced by the six platoons of Khattak which comprised of two platoons each of Akora, {seni and barak} and two platoons of }Yousafzai, the latter were transferred from Zhob Militia and former from south Waziristan Scouts. Thus the original composition of the corps being comprised exclusively of Khyber Agency tribes was altered, next year in August 1955 an additional but temporary increase of eight platoons along with two officers were sanctioned , this was exclusively for the Warsak Dam protection which was being constructed. These eight platoons had Orakzai & Bangash both Sunnis {two platoons each} , Adam Khel Afridi also had two platoons and Daur and Wazir one each; these platoons were newly raised where as other were transferred from Tochi Scouts and south Waziristan scouts. Daur were for the first time inducted in Frontier Corps, The overall strength of the corps thus reached an all time high of 9 officers, 58 JCOs, 101 havildars, 102 naiks and 1639 lance naiks and sepoy's there by making a grand total of 1909.

Major Zia Ul Haq. Later chief of army staff and president of Pakistan , reported at Khyber Rifles in March 1954 from guides cavalry, he had served on temporary attachment with Tochi Scouts also but now he was permanently posted, he commanded No.3 Wing which mainly looks after the Warsak Dam. His family also moved here at Landi Kotal. Major Zia was a popular officer mainly due to his good nature, humbleness and religious inclination and all these are the qualities most required in a scout along with good physical stamina and professional approach. He despite all his efforts could not master the Pashtu language but he understood it when others were speaking. A keen tennis player and always a volunteer for gashts. When General Zia became the president and he visited his old Rifles , his handiwal approached him and requested for the construction of a track till his village ..killay, General smilingly not only sanctioned a road as per his handiwal's desire but also made sure that electricity should also reach there. Present Chahrbagh road thus not only benefits the killi but the Khyber Rifles Wing also gained immense advantage as it now link it with main pass.

In 1957 the corps was being commanded by Lieutenant colonel Sherin Khan who later on not only became the Inspector General Frontier Corps but also had the distinction of becoming a three star general officer. As a commandant his contributions are many but compiling of the standing orders was a deep reaching act. Khyber Rifles was responsible for the protection of the international border {Durand line all along the Khyber agency's limits, it was also responsible to guard and protect within the agency the lines of communication both rail and road, protection of Warsak Dam and other pumping stations and above all to assist the political administration in the maintenance of law and order.

War 1965

A contingent of Khyber Rifles took prominent part in the Indo-Pak War 1965. Two companies of Khyber Rifles were sent to Bimber Sector and two more companies went to Titwal Sector in Kashmir. In Titwal Sector the headquarters of both companies was at Chug Pahar, while the scouts occupied Hajira, Sunjawa and Jabri. One of the company was detailed under the command of Major Riaz to cross the Indian Border. They remained in the area for three days and had nearly reached their objectives but due to change in the plan, the company was recalled. During operation, the enemy attacked Khyber Rifles's Mortar Platoon. The platoon was under command of Afridi Subedar Yaqub Khan. The enemy was repulsed with heavy casualties. In this operation Subedar Yaqub Khan showed qualities of leadership and for his personal bravery he was awarded Sitara-I-Jurat. The troops remained in Kashmir for six months and after the ceasefire were withdrawn to Khyber. Not only a Sitara-I-Jurat was awarded, but the troops were honored by two Imtiaz Sanads as well. One of the key reasons for their success was in the physical fitness which they possessed by virtue of living and operating in mountainous territories.

Khyber Rifles 1966

In the post 1965 the Khyber rifles emphasized on training, establishing a training camp at Kacha Garhi putting all the wings into the training cycles. Khassadar were also trained, 1600 such Khassadar were imparted training by the Khyber Rifles in 1966 alone, it was conducted at Landi Kotal and Jamrud. Life went as usual, sports competition were held on inter wing basis. Basketball was won by the headquarters wing, football by No.2 Wing, khud race, shooting were won by No.1 Wing which also won the championship banner and trophy. 'Many officers of the corps were invited to attend this function... the response from pensioners JCOs very encouraging'²⁵. Major Khush Ahmed ul Mulk the second in command of Khyber Rifles retired after rendering 20 years of meritorious service in the Frontier corps, we wish him happy and prosperous life'²⁶. Some of the great names of Khyber rifles like Subedars; Khan Asghar Malik din Khel, Shah Jem Mahsud, Khan Sher Orakzai, Akbar Khan Adam Khel and Naib subedars; Janat Mir Barak Khattak, Zohar Din Adam Khel and Meraj Gul Bangash retired in 1966. On the other hand Mian Shah Malik din Khel, Matiullah Mahsud, Kahmat Shah Orakzai, Azbar Khan Qamber Khel, Yaqin Shah Adam Khel were promoted as subedars while Ayub Khan Mahsud, Habibur Rehman Barak Khattak, Said Muhammad Orakzai, Gul Nazar Qamber Khel, Muhammad Akbar Adam Khel and Abdullah Jan Bangash were promoted as Naib subedars. Havildar Gulmat Shah Orakzai and Havildar Said Afzal both were awarded Tamgha I Khidmat in 1966.

²⁵ Frontier corps News Letter, 1966, p-36.

²⁶ Frontier corps News letter, 1966.

No less than 24 distinguished visitors grace the Khyber Rifles in 1966 alone including His Majesty King Faisal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.

War 1971

A Contingent of three companies was sent to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in April 1971. They gave good account of themselves during the war. The companies went to Dacca by air and then further to Silhet Sector. During their stay they performed various duties and were attached with different army units.

On our Western front three companies of Khyber Rifles went to Gilgit. Out of these one company was deployed in Mini Marg. The other two companies under Command Major Aslam Janjua were sent to Chelum via Astur in very difficult terrain, lofty mountains with narrow gorges. The troops under such difficult conditions behaved extremely well. Vigorous patrolling was carried out. A contingent of Bajaur Scouts was also in the vicinity and in one of the sirmish **Khyber Rifles lost a soldier.**

In 1974 Mohmand Rifles was to be raised and to help in the raising a strong contingent was sent to Mohmand Agency for security reasons.

Tribal Politics. Kuki Khel and Zakkha Khel are amongst the major subsections of Afridi. The former are located around Jamrud, Ali Masjid and in Tirah while the later in Khyber, Bazar and Bazar Valleys. Wali Khan Kuki Khel and Nadir Khan Zakkha Khel were the Maliks of respective tribes. After a prolonged stay of about twenty years in Afghanistan, Nadir Khan returned to Pakistan. He was accorded a warm official welcome at Torkham which was resented by Wali Khan Kuki Khel. He (Wali Khan) therefore, embarked on a policy of confrontation with the Government in order to establish his importance and ultimately win favours from Pakistan Government. The policy adopted by him was based on exploitation of existing politico military situation in and around Afghanistan and thus secured a large quantum of arms and ammunition with a view to ignoring Pakistan's authority in his area. NWFP Government on learning about the flow of modern weapons into Kuki Khel area demanded their surrender which was refused by the Kuki Khels

Anti Narcotics Drive. 1985

In 1985 Khyber Rifles was ordered to carry out the operation for the destruction of narcotics factories in the agency. Khyber Agency was infested with such factories and huge amount of drugs was being smuggled outside the country, even inside country number of addicted men were in a rise. To save humanity and specially our own kith and kin from this

detestable and dangerous narcotic drug, it was imperative to get rid of the sources of production. A big operation was launched by Khyber Rifles under Lt Col Mahboob Ali Shah, the Commandant of Khyber Rifles. It was difficult in the sense that Khyber Rifles had to take action against their own people but there was no hesitation at all on the part of the men. The action was sudden, thorough and well planned. During the operation forty laboratories were destroyed and person involved in this business hauled up.

This operation naturally had pinched some of the notables of the area. They were accruing colossal amount of money from the sale produce of narcotics. In order to retaliate some anti state elements defected to Afghanistan. The Afghan Government welcomed them and issued them with Russian arms and equipment to create law and order situation in the Agency. In August the Government again entrusted this, onerous duties to the Frontier Corps. Khyber Rifles being in the fore front. The operation was meticulously carried out for twelve days in difficult terrain. Thirty nine anti state elements were apprehended and two hostiles were killed. The insurgency was crushed and law and order restored. The Agency was once again normal.

On the successful conclusion of the mission the Governor of the North Western Province commended the services of Lt Col Mahboob Ali Shah and Major Saeed Ahmed Siddiqui. Lt Col Mehboob Ali Shah was decorated with Tamgha-I-Basalat.

Khawak Ba De Sham 24th November 2009

In November 2Wing of Mahsud Scouts and 1Wing of Khyber Rifles took part in the above name operation which was conducted in the valley to apprehend the miscreants behind recent surge of violence. Fire support was provided from Fort Salop in the form of 130mm and 25 pounder artillery fire. 9 NLI and 40 FF were the two infantry regiments who spearheaded the operation. Corps Commander and IGFC Major General Nadir Zeb visited the Mahsud Scouts on 2nd December

Media mob was briefed at Fort Salop on 30th November 2009, almost all media houses were present, most obnoxious was the Geo followed by Aaj and Express, most sensible was the PTV. The private media houses have only one concern and that is to make money out of a news irrespective of its authenticity.

During the operation houses were searched and sting operations carried out almost on daily basis. Last major operation was conducted on 28th and 29th December 2009, ten people were held in custody, 100 kilogram of hashish was confiscated, Lewana who was the commander of of miscreants was killed in a shoot out on 29th in area Yousaf Talao.

Induction of recruits. 9th batch of recruits had their passing out at Fort Salop, 198 recruits were trained by Mahsud Scouts, out of these 65 were posted in Mahsud Scouts and 113 in Thall Scouts with remaining posted to Orakzai Scouts. Alternatively these recruits were trained at Thall and Fort Salop. 12th Batch was passed out on 18th July 2009 at Fort Salop. In 2012 the recruits were being trained within the Mahsud Scouts at Fort Salop. For

specialist training the courses were being arranged at Jalozei or Warsak under HQFC. Field Firing and battle inoculation were also carried regularly. In June 2008 it was conducted at Nowshehra ranges

A new competition in line with environment was the inter unit sniper competition which was held at Swat Scouts in February 2009, two officers, one JCO and 10 scouts participated from Mizh Mahsud and stood fourth similar results were achieved in the inter unit small arms firing competition .

Colonel Naseer Janjua an armoured corps officer who had also served in Tochi Scouts took over the command on 25th august 2009.

2012- Maira Sar

Maira Sar is the highest peak in the area overlooking the Fort Salop and Shin Kamar Pass. 23 Baluch and 35 Azad Kashmir Regiments, 2W, 3W of Mahsud Scouts, 3W Khyber rifles and two companies of SOG were part of the force. Tactical headquarters was established at Shin Kamar. On 16th February 2012 aerial pounding was done in which Cobras and airforce jets took part followed by artillery fire, a troop of tank was also placed at Shin Kamar. It was a two prong advance with 8 AK regiment supporting the Lawata prong. Another feature of this operation was the induction of village defence committee {VDC} which comprised of loyal tribes, these are mainly broken away factions who are good in holding their own area by virtue of their knowledge of the area. On 17th Maira Sar was captured, Sepoy Ahmed Shah of Mahsud Scouts embraced shahadat along with two other scouts belonging to SOG and four persons of Aman Lashkar and three were injured. An IED blast in one of the 23 Baluch bunker on 18th took the lives of five soldiers.

In another related incident, Sniper fire on Nullah post resulted in an injury to Naik Amir Muhammad Bangash of Mahsud Scouts, later a heavy contingent was sent to evacuate the injured soldiers, during the move back the QRF itself came under attack, three soldiers of 23 Baluch laid their lives while three others including two from Mahsud Scouts were injured. The deadliest attack came on 2nd March 2012 at Maira Sar when ten soldiers of 23 Baluch embraced shahadat and eight others were injured.

Alam Guddar was another hot spot where an operation was conducted on 10th March, 39 miscreants were killed while three own soldiers including an officer of 17 FF embraced shahadat and ten others were injured including one from Mahsud Scouts. Houses of suspected miscreant commanders including Maulvi Faqir and Wazeer were demolished on 20th March 2012 and 125 suspects were arrested. Rasool Jan Markaz was cordoned in the early hours of 22nd April by 2W {MS}, 3W KR, 17 FF and 35 AK regiments in Aziz Market area, Markaz was demolished and five miscreants were killed.

Operation Sheraz was a 24-30 hours operation conducted from evening 9th February to mid night 10th February. A total of eight companies were employed (2x Companies ex 71 Punjab, AK Light Commando, company ex 35 AK, SOG-1, SOG-4 and

two pooled companies ex MS / Swat Scout / Khyber Rifles / ISCR troops) during the operation. Aim was to Philologically dent miscreants through a targeted operation with deception, initially and thereafter. Later sanitize area from Gandao to Spera Dam (Western side) and Fort Jhansi- Spera Dam (Eastern Side).

On 24th February 2013 during “Operation Sheraz-2” . 1Wing Mahsud Scouts was deployed in cordon near Nalla Post, during the operation Company Azad Kashmir Light Commando Battalion reported that there is shortage of ammunition with them and asked for immediate supply. Number 701790 **Havildar Shahid Ali Bangash** deployed in cordon near Nalla Post with Quick Reaction Force 1Wing, immediately loaded the ammunition in Armed Personnel Carrier vehicle and under heavy fire voluntarily rushed towards the site along with driver Number 704248 Sepoy Hanif Shah. On reaching the spot he realized that the combat group which had to take the ammunition for company Azad Kashmir Light Commando Battalion did not reach the RV. He was out of communication with his Wing Commander so he rushed back for further orders. He was again sent back to the same RV, which he again did and successfully handed over the required ammunition to the company Azad Kashmir Light Commando Battalion. His unprecedented display of courage, valour, dedication and selfless attitude assisted the company Azad Kashmir Light Commando Battalion to engage the terrorists causing considerable damage both in terms of men and material.

Present. At present there is cessation of violence in the valley, an operation in undergoing to capture the heights of Tirah and maidan which were usceffussly accomplished on 9th June 2013. Bara Bazar once bustling with live gives the look of a ghost town , deserted and awful silence occasionally broken by jet aircraft flying over head.

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Khyber Rifles Mess

Khyber Rifles Mess another historic landmark, ‘I have read and heard so much about it that I felt as if I have been here before’, a large mess with open green lawn a rare sight here, it is double storied and decorated in style. The gallery of the mess is the most talk about in the world because nowhere else one finds such luminaries like Carter, Nixon, Thatcher, Raza Shah, Robert de Niro, Mahattir, King Hussein, Queen Elizabeth, Diana, Sachin Tendulkar, Quaid e Azam, to name few who have visited and presented their autograph photographs and shields. The varieties of shields are a subject in themselves. Wooden, brass, plastic, crystal, paper, cloth, etching, engraving, and all that has been possible are here; these shields are from almost every country including North Korea, Zimbabwe, Jordan, Abu Dhabi, Glasgow Police, Defence Intelligence Agency, Canadian Mounted Police, Australian

parliament, Swiss armed forces, France, Portugal and even India. Probably the only mess in Pakistan where the shields presented by Indian defence attaches are placed prominently. It is a 'who is who' of Pakistan military, General Zia Ul Haq { he served in Khyber Rifles as major in 1954} Generals Abdul Waheed Kakkar, Mussharraf, and Field Marshall Ayub Khan have graced this mess.. All in all over 1200 such shields adorn the long wall and two rooms of the mess. There are walls dedicated to single country, USA, UK are the leading visitors followed by Turkey. There are rare souvenirs also like the autographed bats of English and Indian cricket teams, the legend like Sachin Tendulkar is there smiling at Torkham Post so is Diana.

Outside is a tree which is in chains because a drunk British officer felt it moving one night in 1913 and ordered it to be chained and it is still chained. The camp is huge, previously it had an outer mud wall as late as 1940 but it is no more there. The water supply comes from Torkham through a pipe and is stored at Mirza Piquet which is located on the northern side at a mile distance.

'Shilmanni' it is a local speciality , the herb is found in Shilmani tribe area. The post commander further increased my knowledge of how to make the green tea, first boil the water, then add sugar and then few herbs of Shilman. The cost of herb is at present about 400 Rupees per kilogram.

Landi Kotal

Is another interesting phenomena, it is the serai of civilization but only for a halt , because there is no water here, water is only at Charbagh, thus in fact Charbagh is the oldest habitat here and not Landi Kotal. On eastern end water is available at Ali Masjid therefore Landi Kotal is a no man's land or Plateau and this position is intact even today. In reality Afridi used to hold the Kabul River mouth which is fifteen miles north of Landi Kotal under them but as the area is almost non irrigable therefore they took it lightly and were soon compromised. Afridis were driven back from the Kabul River mouth by the Arabs in 751 AD, Arabs opted the Loi Shalman approach and surprised the Zakkha Khel by holding the Landi Kotal plateau. with the Shinwari which is more of western tribe. Even today Shinwari are more religious oriented; they had a Qadri Khugga Khel Shinwari as MNA in 2008 elections. Zakkha Khel have a story where they killed a pious man just to have a mazar in their area because they were always conscious of lacking a pious tomb in their area.

Landi Kotal Bazar

Bazaar all belongs to Shinwari. Taxis, shops of all kind less arms or they were not visible, petrol pump, publicity hoardings of mobile companies, hotels, fruit shops , one odd bakery, no beggars and no music in air. It looks too peaceful and commercial, more like Dir.

Saw the old railway station and railway colony, the train service has been terminated after the floods of 2005 which swept away the tracks near Ali Masjid.

Piquet & Post

British established the present camp of Landi Kotal in 1899 and by 1910 had constructed the piquet covering all sides of the camp at higher elevation. All in all there are four such piquets and post, the difference between post and piquet is in size, post have more capacity of troops. After an hour we move back. The deserted water reservoir was once brimmed with water and source of life, water is scarce here, I did not realized it in mess but here life revolves around water. The source is at ten miles away near the Pak-Afghan border .

Mirza Post. The post looks magnificent work of defence , it dominates the area, it is on higher elevation , much bigger in size can hold over 100 soldiers for a fortnight, absolutely covered with only firing slits visible like poke marks on a cheese slab. The post commander initially took me around this solid block of stone. The Shinwari tribe is the neighbour at low elevation. There are no stair cases rather a iron ladder which can be pulled up too. it has three tiers. At the top one half of roof is covered and other half is open to let the sun rays come in. At all corners at all tiers less the base are solid iron protruding boxes with firing slits. The view from top vibrantly a refreshing one , one can see all around, the road junction, the camp, the village around, the communication towers at far mountains. Later I came down and accepted the offer of green tea

Down below is the water reservoir with two colours on the roof, one is meant for local population and other for the militia, the reservoir is divided from inside with a wall.. It is mud brick from inside outside the stones have been used, floor are made of wood so is the roof with steel girders in between, I tried to find out the company who made it, normally TATA were the main suppliers of iron, there girders have been used at Thal Fort also. There is very little electricity no connection from camp, water for post also comes on a bowser . The water bowser cost locals around Rupees fifty which is quite heavy on them.. The post meant to have hundred troops had only six, they cook at their own . This post is in original condition as they have not constructed a cement stairs for ease.

Chahr Bagh Fort.

Chahr Bagh is a Persian word meaning Four Gardens, it is situated few miles towards west of Landi Kotal camp on the road leading to the Torkham. At Michni the diversion takes place towards Chahrbagh. It took us not more than half an hour in a jeep to reach CharBagh from camp. The road to Chahr Bagh is narrow but in good condition,

Chahr Bagh is the most fertile area, in fact it supplies water to the Landi Kotal as well. Fields of corn , the very first such field in days, air pleasant, scenery refreshing . a fort

constructed in 1926, a solid piece of stone with a small gate which hardly allows a small vehicle to pass through, inside a small courtyard with double storied building . wooden stairs , yellow and red colour used freely, it is the wing colour. Area is peaceful with Shinwari tribe in majority, no crimes in the area, main issue is the responsibility of Torkham border checkpoint

How jirga is convened and how it is conducted ?. Basically the maliks who are nominated by the political agent with as many four or five in one village, if anything of interest or grievance take place then the maliks do send message, wing commanders understands their financial aspect ‘ not many maliks can even afford the fare to come to headquarters’ thus he goes around, in other cases it can be a convening order from his side also. In the jirga almost all maliks attend along with anyone else who wants to be there, normally they sit on ground with hand woven carpet laid along with cushions, or if they come to his office than chairs are offered. Normally either the elder malik stars proceeding or Mushtaq himself will open up highlighting the reason for the jirga. In one instance the complaint was from Shilman tribe as they have been suffering from the ban on the sale of fertilizers as they were being used in explosives also. Wing commander resolved the matter by offering them one bag per farmer provided he brings a affidavit from the malik that this will not be used for any miscreant purpose. Tribes are honest despite poverty; despite the breakdown of railway the tracks are still intact and not stolen because of these high moral grounds of keeping the words..

Michni post without any debate is the most famous post in the world { Check point Charlie came up much much later}, it is historical in a sense that it was constructed back in 1900, renovated many times the last one taking place in 2012, and every head of state who visits Pakistan is invariably brought here, delegations comes from all over world to feel the romance of Frontier. It is an old piquet which has been renovated with new outer look. It is similar in size and design to Mirza Piquet or for that matter with any other piquet in Frontier of that era. The piquet constructed at that time falls into two broad categories in terms of capacity and size. This Michni Post falls into lesser category , inside wooden floor, thick walls, white in colour, feeble sun light, wooden stairs leading to upper deck. It was as if I am in my own regiment and not a visitor. On the western side the Torkham was visible through a haze and cloud of mild dust kicked by the trucks. The pass in fact takes a turn here{pass has over 150 turns},

Khassadar check post, every truck is stopped here and checked by khassadar. these khassadar here comprised of three tribes, Shinwari, Shilmani, Afridi and even Mullagori. There is no toll tax on Khyber Pass, one can leave his vehicle for even a week on any part of the pass and it will remain safe that is the duty of khassadar to keep peace in the area. Thus the money which they take from the trucks finances their own existence but more important it helps the tribe to build its financial resources which comes handy when a tribe has to pay a collective fine.

Tamerlane’s Prison, a historian fallacy, in front of Michni Post down in the small gorge and up on a small hillock are two walls and a structure which has been termed as

Tamerlane's prison dating back to 13th century AD, it is a historical fallacy, it is too new in construction and above all why should Tamerlane require a prison, he was not of the type and temperament to have such kind of institutions. The building would have taken at least half a year to construct and by this time Tamerlane was out of India after massacring one hundred thousand Hindus in one night as per his own autobiography so why should he require. Furthermore there is no other building of same design or pattern attributed to him, logically one should find more of them at least at Landi Kotal but there are none. It was not Tamerlane rather Prince Timur son of Shah Shuja the king of Afghanistan who was deposed and it was in 1839 that he was escorted by Captain Wade of British raj to Kabul.

Michni - Torkham, the road here really is nothing more than a track of dust, the mountain itself are soft and there was a cloud of dust kicked by heavy trucks but driver drove fearlessly, everyone leaves the way for the militia vehicle. On the left down below the scenery is different with green oasis with little trickle of water with the prison structure on the ridge that divides the water channel. Another few turns and we were on the plain ground heading for Torkham, one has heard of fish market but here it is truck market, all around heavy trucks with occasional sedans.

Torkham

The road opens up soon a traffic jam mainly due to trucks yet the khassadars kept some kind of discipline better than many traffic warden of many cities. There is a taxi stand, some shops, custom post..typical border post, people must walking, rush, noise, heat, dust, air conditioner was on in the vehicle.

Very unusual arrangement here at border, our complex is open, neat, well organized and well maintained, a monument without any inscription stood in centre with well painted slogans on all sides. The layout is that originally the Durand Line was straight at least here, it is a kind of narrow pass, with high ridge on south who has a water shed in the centre and that is the dividing line, however on ground the border has changed since Durand. In 1962 probably Pakistan & Afghanistan made a barter of land, Pakistan got area a mile inside Afghanistan at Torkham and Afghanistan got one post near Arandu in Chitral. Here on Afghan side there is no water and it is given by Pakistan, the Pakistani post at Torkham which now protrudes into Afghanistan is known as Ayub post after FM Ayub Khan the president of Pakistan at that time. It is so unusual, from our compound a stair leads towards the west around the compound, with an iron grill around it, as you climb up the stairs the area on left is all Afghanistan, thus the zero line remains there and yet you are moving into the Afghan territory in a curved manner and after a kilometre the Ayub Post is reached which is perched at the end of the ridge.

Border itself is nothing more than a chain which is raised at 2000 hours and down at 0600, the Afghan national Army troops wearing fatigue were manning there side, for pedestrians there is a side walk and everyone is checked by them and so is the case on our side where Khyber Rifles do the same. The habitat on the high ridge line is known as Killay

and it has a history and story, General Zia have served in Khyber Rifles in 1954 , his handiwal a Shinwari approached him when Zia became president and asked for electricity for his village , Zia not only provided electricity but also extended the road uptill his village. The Afghan side does not even have electricity rather they are on solar power, we are getting electricity from Peshawar through grid stations at Jamrud.

Afridis now do not have any clan north of Landi Kotal and Shinwari or no other non Afridi tribe is settled south of watershed, the water belongs to Afridi. Thus in old civilisation the water dispute forced Shinwari to have a peace with Afridi .Similar act was done in 1966 when Afghanistan conceded Pakistan area west of Durand Line at Torkham , west of Kabul River and gaining same advantage at River Chitral gorge in north. If one looks at the Landi Kotal drawing one can make it out like a Right Foot, with toe as Landi Kotal and middle finger as Michni, which thus acts as a post for Shinwari in old time. The present day military garrison which was established in 1850 onwards is in Shinwari area. Thus Shinwari balanced their numerical inferiority by having the military providing them the security.

Now these five clans are called **Khyberis** which can be termed like a EEC of present, G8 or Big Five. The origin of name Khyber is mystery too so is the stone near Ali Masjid which is attributed to Hazrat Ali, but he never came here, interestingly there is another by the name of Khyber which is ten miles north of Torkham inside present day Afghanistan. One of the most interesting query is that why does not Khyber Pass or for that matter even Afridi have not joined hands with Talibans?. Mangal Bagh a Sipah Afridi does not belong to Khyber Pass. It seems being the trade route the tribes are getting all their wealth from it thus the Zakkha Khel and Kuki Khel have kept themselves away from politics.

Ali Masjid Forts

Khyber rifles Ali Masjid Fort was constructed in 1927, it is on the saddle overlooking Ali Masjid mosque and the small valley on the east .There are two piquets at Ali Masjid the eastern piquet overlook the east and the western piquet has a much smaller view as the pass it self is at its narrowest band, however the important water source and the area on west remains under observation. Both piquets are of identical pattern and size which is rectangular in pattern , three storied solid piece of stone, mud, iron and wood complex. In 1942 the wall was erected on the southern edge of the saddle thus making the complex asa fort, on the northern edge is the road and stream almost 1500 feet below. Area is rough, mountainous, with green shrubs which are of no use other than giving a green colour , shade and camouflage, no fruit trees. Stones, rocks are of solid in nature, the most obvious is the ‘Chaqmaq’ which when strikes together produces spark. Originally there was no motor able track leading to the fort from Ali Masjid ; it was an equitation oriented piquet complex. It was important in every sense because it was overhead the place where most gruesome massacre of Sikh battalions took place twice between 1837-1839 , in the past similar history is orally traded. Importance is in the strategic location of the Ali Masjid ; other tracks which originates from Landi Kotal and follows Chora valley and the track coming from Tirah alley

joins here. Thus for the caravans moving towards the west in medieval ages this place was important ; abundance of water at Ali Masjid is another key factor, it still providing water to Shagai and Jamrud forts since 1878. The very first Sikh venture under illustrious Hari Singh Nalwa in April 1837 was mainly a push by the Nalwa to secure water for the Jamrud Fort. Kuki Khel a clan of Afridi lives and control the pass along with water source, although Zakkha Khel also have a bazaar here.

Ali Masjid name and mystique comprises of few segments, the village itself is on the east of the Khyber rifles Fort in the open bowl, the Khyber-Torkham, railway line have its railway station here too. The mosque which has given the whole valley its present name is at the foothill of the Fort, the history of Ali Masjid is oral in nature which rely upon the presence of Hazarat Ali in the area, most likely the place became popular during Mahmud of Ghazna reign. During the Hindushahi rule of the area {900AD} and even before this date the lone historical evidence is the Buddhist stupa which is on the west of Ali Masjid mosque. A close observation of the adjoining hills highlights the unmistakable remnants of old fortifications , one particular such hillock is located north west of western piquet.

The Ali Masjid fort went a major expansion in 1942 when the underground bunkers were constructed , they are presently used as hospital but they were never meant for this purpose originally. The hospital is a marvel of originality , hard work and engineering. It is practically bomb proof and is the one of its kind on Frontier. It is almost fifty feet deep and inside the mountain, almost twenty odd feet in width and 150 feet in length. There are no outlets for fresh air neither for any kind of light, rooms are small and without any door, more of operation room of an army than that of medical profession.

Another myth of Ali Masjid fort is the southern watch tower which is almost an hour walk from the main complex because of broken ground, it was constructed in the same time period as the underground bunker. The myth started in 1983 when the sentries posted at the watch tower started creating rumors about the 'Jin' and soon it became so established a fact that sentries one night simply ran away from the watchtower complaining of being hit with stones by the Jins. The watch tower was abandoned and even few rounds of mortar were fired on it by the wing itself to dispel the thoughts of it being occupied by extra terrestrial creatures. Presently the fort was not under regular occupation since 2007 because of deployment at other sectors and now No.3 Wing is in process of establishing its headquarters thus the old myths have surfaced again for which both commandant and wing commander have decided to visit the watchtower themselves but it is an interesting myth.

Water shortage had been a major source of all disasters in past, within the fort there is a central water storage having a capacity of over 80,000 gallons and half a dozen more water tanks with lesser quantity hold. Weather is fine in summer but cold in winter which is further aggravated by the strong winds which blows all the time as the fort stands at the junction of various valleys . Electricity load shedding is another factor which makes living in isolation even more obvious, however the solar panels are a new invention and troops are making the best use of it by having small panels for mobile charging.

Shagai Fort.

Shagai Fort was constructed in 1927 at the eastern edge of the village Ali Masjid on a higher plateau overlooking the railway station and the whole valley, it was constructed as an army fort and till to date it has always been under occupation of army regiments. It is a diamond shape and structure complex, constructed with brick and iron, having over fifty feet high walls with five watch towers which can operate independently also, water storage is outside the walls of fort but within fire shot of sentries. The western lands adjacent to fort is utilised as the firing range and sports ground. There is a swimming pool and squash court apart from tennis court inside the fort. Fort have two storied construction, all in all 104 rooms are available for living accommodation with each room sufficient enough for platoon strength of force. The fort construction primarily follows the Drosh fort construction design in which firing bays are incorporated within the living quarters. The other unique feature of construction is the circular roof, a sentry can walk all around the fort roof. Shagai Fort and Ali Masjid Forts are in line of sight to each other with two more piquets along the axis, Shagai also have two more watchtowers, one in the north and other in the east. Presently it is the rear headquarters of Schwebo Battalion.

Shagai importance lies in the fact that it controls the Tirah valley route also and act as reserve to any event which spills out of Khyber Rifles control.

Jamrud Fort.

Jamrud Fort is the oldest fort in the Khyber Rifles area of operations, Khyber Pass starts or terminates at Jamrud depending upon whether one is moving eastward or westward. There are two forts at Jamrud, one the old and original fort is presently located on the north side of the road Peshawar-Kabul and the smaller fort is on the southern side of the road. The original fort is under the army use and the Khyber Rifles wing occupies the rather new fortified complex which in reality cannot be termed as a fort.

Hari Singh Nalwa completed the construction of forts that included Jamrud, Peshawar and Shab Qadar. Jamrud was under command of Maha Singh with a strength of 600 Sikh and Muslims troops, where as Shab Qadar was placed under command of Lehna Singh Sandhawala with 1900 troops.²⁷ Layout and construction of Jamrud Fort is almost a replica of Bala Hisar of Peshawar only it is small in circumference. Constructed with mud bricks which still are in use with supplement of stone bricks. Undoubtedly the fort stands today in almost the same fashion as it was in 1837, the grand wooden gate is still in use so is the water well

²⁷ Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh Maharaja of the Punjab* {Penguin, 1962, Delhi}, p189.

which is 400 feet deep. Jamrud thus stands as the last frontier fort of the Sikhs protecting Peshawar and also the Lahore Darbar from the invasion route of millenniums; Khyber Pass.

Jamrud Fort was popularly known as 'Hari Nalwa Fort' after the Sikh general who not only completed it but also took his last breaths here on 30th April 1837. The very room in which Nalwa spent last days of his life is the top of the fort and after his death the news was hidden from the soldiers due to morale factor and for three days the dead body of Nalwa used to be propped on the window to keep the troops morale high and intact. In 1892 a Samadhi was constructed in the memory of Nalwa.

Jamrud Fort or Nalwa Fort provides excellent all round observation as far as eye can see, it was important because it kept a check on the Afghans attempt to recapture Peshawar, presently it is still vital for the maintenance of peace and order in the area. Fort now encompasses almost whole area and land in the north uptill the Jamrud railway station, a wall has been erected around the complex which was completed in 2009. Firing range, sports ground and troops married accommodation which in the past were outside the main fort are now within the walled complex. One infantry battalion remains in occupation of the fort and it helps also in its maintenance and uplift. Fort has five cordons each separated by a gate and area becomes narrow and narrow as it moves inward and upward ; ultimately at the top which is almost 300 feet higher than the ground level there are only a compound of five rooms at the top which in the past was the residence of the fort commander.

Khyber Rifles Jamrud Fort.

The other fort , smaller in size was constructed in 1944 opposite the main Nalwa Fort, it is flat in nature with open compound having double storied accommodation three sides with office on the remaining end. With the passage of time it kept on expanding and now houses the political administration offices in the adjacent land, it used to be the wing headquarters as well but now one company is stationed. As recently as on 13th November 2013, the Khyber Rifles successfully conducted an operation against the group of kidnappers hiding in the Jamrud area from this fort; it was a successful operation.

Tribal/ Qaum Representation.

Tribe wise representation of scouts in the Khyber Rifle is as under:-

Tribe	No of Platoos
Afridi	11
Khattak	11
Mahsud	04
Bangash	06
Mullagori	05
Yousafzai	05
Mohmand	02
Orakzai	03
Wazir	07
Shilmani	08

Khyber Rifles and War Against Militancy 2001-2014.

Khyber Rifles

Darra Adam Khel (DAK) – Op Eagle Swoop-II. Indus Highway was closed and militants’ attack on LEAs and abduction of government officials became a norm in DAK. Resultantly, Frontier Corps conducted Op Eagle Swoop-II to open the Indus Highway and flush out the militants. Operation progressed well and on 22 September 2008, Indus highway was secured and opened for all kinds of traffic.

Op Daralam & Sirat-e-Mustaqeem. Militants’ activities witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in the adjacent areas of Peshawar and NATO Logistic Convoyes were frequently attacked on Road Jamrud-Torkhum. Operation Daralam was conducted from 30 December 2008 to 19 January 2009 to flush out the militants from the adjacent areas of Peshawar in Khyber Agency and secure Road Jamrud-Torkhum. Operation was successful and achieved its objective. During the operation, 318 x militants including 125 x Afghans were arrested with huge quantity of weapons and ammunition. Operation Serat-e-Mustaqeem was conducted in Bara Area of Khyber Agency. Operation has again progressed well and Bara has been largely secured

Operation Khwakh Ba De Sham. Sequel to conduct of successful operations by Frontier Corps in Bajaur, Mohmand Agencies and South Waziristan Agency (under command Army), militants were uprooted from these areas. They were forced to restrict their activities in few areas where they were trying to re-establish themselves for continuation of their nefarious agenda. South Eastern part of Khyber Agency and Orakzai Agency were few such places providing safe heavens to the miscreants. Being in close vicinity and availability of routes, the miscreants were carrying out their activities in Peshawar and Kohat. They also tried to create law and order situation in Kurram Agency in consonance with warring Shia and Sunni elements in these areas. Kidnapping for ransom became a routine practice. The road Thall – Parachinar was completely closed and heavy escorts were required for move of LEAs convoys. Owing to the deteriorated situation, Operation Khwakh Ba De Sham was launched in Khyber, Kurram and Orakzai Agencies. Kinetic Operations in Orakzai Agency are concluded while policing operation continued. The area of Mamozai was dealt with air / aviation efforts. Major portion of the Agency has been cleared and a massive blow to the terrorists was given. Sealing of routes to Waziristan has been achieved. Road Parachinar – Thall has been opened for all sort of convoys. Cease fire between both sects after strenuous efforts by the Frontier Corps has been achieved and situation is on the mend. Besides strong holds of militants in area mentioned above, their sanctuaries in Dogar, Shashu, Spirkot, Pastawana, Sharku Land, Shahu Khel, Hangu and Upper Kurram have been cleared. During operation, 447 militants were killed and more than 2893 were apprehended/ surrendered. 135 All ranks embraced Shahadat and 623 got injured. Huge cache of weapons and ammunition was also recovered / confiscated from the militants

Operation Maira Sar. March 2012. Operation Maira Sar was conducted in general area Bara from 16 Feb 2012 to 08 Mar 2012. 21x soldiers embraced shahadat and 25x soldiers got injured during the operation.

Operation Bia Daralam-4. Operation Bia Daralam-4 was undertaken in general area Alam Gudar, Bara on 10 March 2012.

Tirah.2013

The famous Tirah or the maidan lies in the south east of Landi Kotal a three hours drive. Tirah is the summer home of Afridi, like a grand family they all migrate to Tirah when the heat becomes high in the plains. This they have been doing since centuries; it is this weather related migration which distinguish Afridi's from other tribes ; not every pathan tribe migrates or have ancestral lands in the high mountains. This is the grand birth place of Afridi. Tirah is the highest valley with an altitude of 6000 feet {Peshawar is 1700 feet, Kohat, 1900 feet, Landi Kotal 3400 feet}.

Valley is bestowed by the nature with everything which it have. Fresh water, fruit trees, olive, thick pine trees, brooks, fountain, wild animals like snow leopard roam freely at

night preying upon the other wild life. There is one very distinct herb which has a profound impact on history; hashish. The world's best quality is harvested here. The valley is almost a replica of Hassan Bin Sabah's Assassins; less a fort or a central figure. Every clan of Afridi have their ancestral lands here and they just occupy it and then leave down to their winter warmer abodes. The Reegi ilma the very area around which the present day western edge of Peshawar city is prospering belongs to clans of Afridi. Tirah is another natural pass to enter into Pakistan from Afghanistan; it is equally important historically; there are very strong logic to believe that Alexander the great entered India from Tirah rather than from the north of Khyber. Mughuls were fond of it but Afridi always kept their summer place safe and did not allow any individual to intrude.

In 2013 spring an offensive was launched in the valley in which Khyber rifles Mizh Mahsud and army units participated. Aim was to hit at the sanctuaries of Mangal Bagh Afridi who in last five odd years had gained stronghold in area in terms of agitating the population in the name of religion and more importantly he was getting in touch with the Waziristan rebels which if succeeded would have increased the government atsk in restoring normalcy in the area. By summer the valley was cleared.

History of Khyber Rifles Wings

No.1 Wing. The oldest wing of the Rifles however after re-raising of the Khyber Rifles in 1946 , the two wings were raised simultaneously{No.1 & 2 Wings }